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THE COLLECTIVE NOVEL: SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

University — Université

University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Master of Arts

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
1979	Prof. E. Mozejko

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THE COLLECTIVE NOVEL: SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

by

MARINA ALLEMANO

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1979

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE COLLECTIVE NOVEL: SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS submitted by MARINA ALLEMANO in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

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Date September 28, 1979

ABSTRACT

The term "collective novel" is widely used in Scandinavian literary research to designate a certain type of novel that flourished especially in Sweden and Denmark during the period 1910-1940. Scholars in these countries have referred to the genre as novels in which the single protagonist is replaced by a group. The novel's outward form has been described as a mosaic of incidents, character portraits, and descriptions. As far as subject-matter is concerned, there is a great variety to be found, although most critics agree that the groups in question tend to include people who either work together or live at the same address or both. There has been very little discussion of any similar types of novel outside the Scandinavian countries.

The aim of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, it was in our interest to compile and analyse the existing research done on the collective novel, so that we would be in a position to formulate our own definition. Secondly, we wished to change the topic from being a phenomenon of ethnic literature to one of comparative literature by including novels from abroad in our analysis. As a result, the second, third, and fourth chapters deal with form, techniques, subject-matter, and ideologies in regard to Fiskerne by Hans Kirk, Manhattan Transfer by John Dos Passos, and Jules

Romains' Mort de quelqu'un.

Our findings are that the three works are variations of social novels that portray society as a nexus of collectives rather than of individuals. In order to achieve this image, the writers have developed a specific form in which the plot progresses according to the stories of the groups. The characters are subordinate to the development of the collectives and thus become types.

Furthermore, a variety of innovative techniques are present in these novels, such as simultanéité, ensembles, and montage. These methods not only help to single out the important details, but also intensify the over-all impression of a panoramic view. The principle inherent in the montage technique that the juxtaposition of several well-selected representations produces an image, which is something more than and different from the mere sum of the various representations, is of particular interest in this connection. The same principle appears in the sociological theory developed by Émile Durkheim concerning group behaviour as well as in Romains' theory of unanimism, both of which imply that the group consciousness is more than the sum of each individual's consciousness.

It is evident from our study of plot and characterization that the novelists are well aware of this sociological concept of groups, as the various collectives follow their own rules and goals, irrespective of individual participation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Upon completion of my thesis, I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Edward Mozejko, University of Alberta, for having supervised this work.

I would also like to thank Professor George Bisztray, University of Toronto, for his valuable advice in regard to my initial research on this topic.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of collectivities began to appear in various literary works toward the end of the nineteenth century. First of all writers showed an increased interest in describing society at large; secondly, crowd scenes appeared in various works; and thirdly, some writers experimented with collective novels and plays in which the protagonist constituted an entire group.

Zola's Rougon-Macquart series (1871-93) is one of the most impressive examples of a portrayal of society and its many institutions. Germinal (1885) in particular describes the life of a mining community during a labour crisis, and although the action centers around the Maheu family, the novel contains several mob scenes as well. A few years later, Émile Verhaeren wrote a trilogy of plays (Les Campagnes Hallucinées (1893), Les Villes Tentaculaires (1895), and Les Aubes (1898)) which deal with the growth and dynamics of the city.

In Germany Gerhart Hauptmann experimented not only with mob scenes in his Die Weber (1892), but also with a new type of dramatic presentation of a milieu. Instead of a traditional plot, Hauptmann composed a series of independent scenes that together made up the tragic story of the weavers.

The collective form was not exclusively a naturalistic vehicle of expression. In Joseph Conrad's short novel The Nigger of Narcissus (1897), for example, the plot revolves round a ship's crew as it does in C. S. Forester's The Ship (1943).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Jules Romains introduced the concept of unanimism in his poetry, plays, and novels. An advocate of spiritual collectivism, Romains concentrated on groups rather than on individuals in his works. In the following thesis, we have chosen to analyse his first longer piece of fiction Mort de quelqu'un (1911), as it displays Romains' unanimist theories as well as his experimental narrative techniques.

Other authors attempted the collective form, e.g. Elmer Rice with the play Street Scene (1929) and Louis Bromfield with the novel Twenty-four Hours (1930). Furthermore, we find a group of novels devoted to large cities, such as James Joyce's Ulysses (1922), John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer (1925), and Alfred Döblin's Berlin-Alexanderplatz (1930). On an even larger scale Dos Passos' trilogy USA (1938) and Romains' roman-fleuve Les Hommes de bonne volonté (1932-46) in twenty-seven volumes portray entire continents.

A parallel trend to the "panoramic" novel is a group of post-revolutionary novels in USSR, e.g. Serafimovich's The Iron Flood (1924), Gladkov's Cement (1925), and Kataev's Time, Forward (1932). Based on Marxist ideology these novels depict the work and progress of the masses although the

protagonist often is a single individual, the Soviet hero.

The collective novel as a variant of the social novel became very popular in Scandinavia during the second and third decades of this century. Some precursors were Herman Bang's Stuk (1887), a portrait of Copenhagen, Knut Hamsun's social novels Børn af tiden (1913), Segelfoss by (1915), and Konerne ved vandposten (1920), as well as Martin A. Nexø's Pelle Erobreren (1906-10). The majority of novels, however, were written after the publication of Hans Kirk's Fiskerne (1925).

From a host of literary works treating collectives, we have concentrated on a group of social novels which is characterized by a special form and by untraditional narrative techniques. Mort de quelqu'un, Fiskerne, and Manhattan Transfer are thus novels of the same genre while at the same time they demonstrate varieties within the genre.

II. TOWARDS A DEFINITION

> Man kan ikke rejse en proletarkunst efter et program. Kunst kan ikke konstrueres, den må gro organisk frem. Formen, så gennemtænkt og revolutionær den er, skaber aldrig en ny bund, men det friske nyoplevede stof kan gøre det. Man må søge stoffet og foreløbig ikke bryde sig om formen. Den skal tiden nok slibe til. [1]

It is hardly a new idea in literary theory that subject-matter, or Stoff, ought to precede form in the creative writing of a literary work. In his search for a proletarian art form, the Danish writer Hans Kirk (1899-1962) did indeed seek new subject-matter for his first novels. He found this among the common people of the working class and especially of those in rural areas. Writers before him had also found inspiring material in the poor rural communities in Denmark, but the interesting thing about Kirk is that with a new approach to the subject-matter, he produced at the same time a new form in Danish literature which is now known as the collective form. From his essay entitled "Om proletarkunst" (1927), we know that Kirk had expected this new type of literature to be of a rough and rather crude expression in its first stages, regardless of the chosen genre. Nevertheless, he did produce an almost perfect collective novel, as far as both form and content are concerned, in Fiskerne (1928). In short, the novelty in

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[1] Hans Kirk, "Om proletarkunst," in his Litteratur og tendens: Essays og artikler, ed. Børge Houmann (Copenhagen: Gyldendals Uglebøger, 1974), p. 20.

Kirk's approach was to tell a story about a social group of people at a specific time in history without having to resort to the use of a single protagonist and a tightly knit plot. In other words, the people as a group should be telling their own story. Since Fiskerne, Kirk wrote other novels in the same genre, notably Daglejerne (1936) and De ny tider (1939), and later Slaven (1948). Many of his contemporaries in Denmark through the 1930's followed his example, e.g. Knuth Becker with Verden venter (1934), H.C. Branner with Legetøj (1936), Leck Fischer with Karrégade 23 (1930), Kontormennesker (1935), and Hvordan i morgen (1938), and Harald Herdal with Man skal jo leve (1934) and Løg (1935). Even some of the more recent writers have pursued this type of novel to the extent that literary critics and historians have talked about a continuing trend. Hilmar Wulff's trilogy Vejen til livet (1942-49), Hans Scherfig's Idealister (1944), William Heinesen's De fortabte spillemænd (1950), Peter Seeberg's Bipersonerne (1956), and Klaus Rifbjerg's Marts 1970 (1970) are examples of later collective novels.

It is neither possible nor relevant to this study to investigate whether these writers just accidentally happened to write novels with the same basic structure as in Fiskerne, or if the collective form simply became a model for them in a fashionable way. It is a fact, however, that at least twenty novels in this particular genre were written in Denmark between 1928 and 1947.

In Norway and Sweden a smaller number of novels were written in the collective genre as well. Depending on the definitions suggested by the various scholars, these novels number about twenty. As in Denmark, most of the books were produced during the 1920's and 1930's, although Hamsun's social novels dating from 1913-20, e.g. Børn af tiden (1913), Segelfoss by (1915), and Konerne ved vandposten (1920), could be included as predecessors of the genre. Martin Koch's first novel Arbetare: En historia om hat from 1912 has also been viewed as a forerunner of the collective novel in Sweden.[2] At least one young writer in the same country, Per Holmer (1951-), has continued the tradition with his novel Allmänheten (1976), a modern collective novel depicting a section of the working class during the early 1960's.

As far as the term "collective novel" is concerned, Scandinavian critics have assigned this label to a number of novels written outside Scandinavia, while at the same time they have realized that the term itself is a Scandinavian invention and not a part of the international literary terminology. To our knowledge no systematic study has been done to date on any possible collective genre outside the three Nordic countries. This phenomenon might well be due to the fact that only a few writers abroad have explored the possibilities that the collective form presents, which makes it difficult to talk about a similar trend , as the case was

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[2]Peter Graves, "The Collective Novel in Sweden," Scandinavica, 12 (1973), 115.

in Scandinavia. Some of the American social novels from the thirties (Steinbeck, Sinclair Lewis, Faulkner, and Sherwood Anderson) are very similar to the Scandinavian collective novels as far as content goes, but if taken in a strictly formal sense, most of these social novels would fall outside the realm of the genre in question.

Our reasons for including an American and a French novel in this study despite the lack of critical material, are firstly, because we consider both Manhattan Transfer (1925) by John Dos Passos and Mort de quelqu'un (1911) by Jules Romains as belonging to the collective genre, and secondly, because the two works each represent a variation of the genre that is different from the Scandinavian types. In the following discussion of existing critical material written on the collective novel, the reader will find statements mostly made by scholars of Scandinavian literature. As far as unanimistic literature is concerned, we will briefly refer to Jules Romains' introduction to Les Hommes de bonne volonté and P. J. Norrish's The Drama of the Group. It will thus be one of the aims of this chapter to extend the existing research to encompass an analysis of non-Scandinavian literary works. In this way the study will change from being a topic of an ethnic literature to one of comparative literature.

As already mentioned, the majority of collective novels were published during the 1920's and 1930's. The Danish scholar Sven Møller Kristensen attributes this fact to a

certain Zeitgeist which was making its way through the Western world during the years of the Depression.[3] He and other critics have been quite specific about a certain causal relationship between the collective novels and their respective authors' world views. Ole Hyltoft Petersen states clearly in his essay on the Danish collective novel that "den kollektive fortælleform er en stil skabt af et livssyn."[4] This collective view of life, he continues, had its roots in the sufferings and the tense atmosphere created by the Great Depression, which caused many writers to become socialists. According to the same critic: "Socialisme er at føle individuelt, men forstå kollektivt" (Socialism is to feel individually, but to understand collectively).[5] We can thus conclude from this essay that the collective novel was inevitably born out of a specific economic situation in history. Although there is a great deal of truth in this argument, it hardly provides the whole truth about the genesis of the collective novel. When discussing literature, the element of literary tradition is as important as the historical-materialistic facts surrounding the literary works. Thus the doctrines and techniques of nineteenth century naturalism and realism have had an enormous impact on the development of the neo-realistic novel in the

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[3]Sven Møller Kristensen, "Den kollektive roman," Proceedings of the Fifth International Study Conference on Scandinavian Literature (London: University College, 1964), p. 147.

[4]Ole Hyltoft Petersen, "Den kollektive roman," in Tilbageblik på 30'erne: Litteratur, teater, kulturdebat 1930-39, ed. Hans Hertel (Copenhagen: Stig Vendelkærs forlag, 1967), II, 8.

[5]Ibid.

twentieth century. This is especially true of the society-oriented novels referred to as samfundsskildringer in Danish. Some suggestions will be added elsewhere in this chapter as to the literary background of the genre under consideration.

In returning to the introductory statement by Hans Kirk, that subject-matter should always precede form in creative writing, it is interesting to notice that at least two critics[6] have chosen to classify this particular type of novel, to which Fiskerne belongs, according to its form and not the Stoff. The reason for this approach lies in the fact that genre studies since Aristotle have classified literature according to its outward form and characteristic techniques. In their definitions, these critics do not place much importance on the content of the novels, nor on their social implications, but concentrate on the question of form.[7] The boundaries of the original subject-matter, that is the social collective, have then been extended in order to include a wider selection of material. From being a closely defined social group in Fiskerne, the collective has for these above-mentioned critics come to mean any group of people at all, as for example the funeral procession

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[6]See Torben Brostrøm, "Den kollektive komposition," in Dansk litteraturhistorie, ed. P. H. Traustedt (Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag, 1966), IV, 124-26; and Janet Mawby, "The Collective Novel and the Rise of Fascism in the 1930's," in Ideas and Ideologies in Scandinavian Literature since the First World War, ed. Sveinn Skorri Höskuldsson (Reykjavik: University of Iceland, Institute of Literary Research, 1975), pp. 143-61.

[7]Brostrøm, p. 124; and Mawby, p. 146.

consisting of unrelated individuals in Mort de quelqu'un by Jules Romains and the five disaster victims in The Bridge of San Luis Rey (1927) by Thornton Wilder.

Thus, there have been at least two different critical approaches to the collective novel as a genre. One group of critics has put the greater emphasis on the Stoff itself and on its underlying ideologies. The second group, on the other hand, has considered the genre concept as a question of formal structure, following the footsteps of the traditional genre theorists. As a result, the divergent definitions have included a dissimilar group of novels for supporting examples. One obvious disagreement would be the choice of Martin Andersen Nexø's Pelle Erobreren (1906-10) as a collective novel seen from an ideological viewpoint, versus Thornton Wilder's The Bridge of San Luis Rey considered from a purely formal angle.

In order to attain a greater understanding of the collective novel, it will be necessary to discuss the various definitions put forward by earlier critics of the genre, and to investigate some of the works of fiction suggested in this context. Furthermore, a modified definition of the genre will be proposed by the author of this thesis, based on the previous research done by other critics combined with the new material introduced here. Fiskerne, Manhattan Transfer, and Mort de quelqu'un will be examined in detail in regard to their respective forms and narrative techniques in the second and third chapters.

Finally, contrasting and parallel themes will be explored in the last chapter in order to get closer to the very nature of the collective novel.

The first step in the procedure towards a definition of the genre will be to take a closer look at the literary debate that has already taken place concerning the issue. Among the novelists themselves, only a few have published theoretical statements on the new type of novel that they were exploring. Besides Hans Kirk in Denmark, the Swedish writer Ivar Lo-Johansson was among the outspoken advocates. Known as a so-called proletarian writer by literary historians, Lo-Johansson made several complaints about the existing literature in Sweden. In particular, he criticized the traditional novel types, which in his view had not changed in approach since Strindberg. In his essay "Statarskolan" (1938), he had outlined a complete program for the new generation of writers as an aid to creating a contemporary and more meaningful literature.

The literary situation is in this way quite reminiscient of an earlier period in Scandinavian literary history, the famous Moderne gennembrud which dates from about 1870. At that time the Danish scholar Georg Brandes gave his renowned lectures under the heading Hovedstrømninger at the University of Copenhagen. In his criticism of the literature at the time, Brandes made statements very similar to those of Lo-Johansson almost seventy years later. The two did not have much else in

common, Brandes being an academic and a representative of the then liberal bourgeoisie, whereas Lo-Johansson was a non-academic autodidact and a spokesman for the proletariat. They did both, however, condemn the literature of their own times for its reactionary character and narrow-mindedness. They both hoped for a new liberating kind of literature, one that would discuss the realities of life as they perceived it.

In his portrayal of Henrik Ibsen in 1882, Brandes states clearly the subjects and ideals that contemporary writers ought to pursue. Firstly, he promoted topics that are connected with religious debates; secondly, those dealing with the contrasts between the societies of the past and the future, or specifically the struggle between two successive generations. Those items treating the various classes of society and their life struggles (not class struggles, however) come next, and finally Brandes encouraged topics discussing the contrast between the two sexes and especially of women's emancipation.[8] Brandes' ideas can best be summarized in his own words: "At en litteratur intet sætter under debat er det samme, som at den er i færd med at tabe al betydning" (When a literature does not debate anything, it means that it is losing all its significance).[9] For this nineteenth century scholar the goal of literature was to bring up current problems for

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[8]Georg Brandes, Samlede skrifter (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1900), III, 297.
[9]Brandes, Samlede skrifter, IV, 5.

discussion. In modern terms, Brandes wanted the younger generation of writers to become committed to the problems of their own time and not to remain in the romantic past. Therefore it is understandable why Brandes was a great admirer of Henrik Ibsen. In Brandes' view Ibsen had met all the requirements of a modern committed writer.

Although it is not our intention to analyse the literary climate of the Modern Breakthrough, it is interesting to observe the similarity of revolt against the existing literature in the two periods respectively. Whereas Brandes' objection was a reaction against the Golden Age of Romanticism in Denmark, which in his opinion had lasted forty years longer than elsewhere in Europe,[10] the young committed writers of the thirties revolted against the subjective realism prevailing in their contemporary literature.[11] The Modern Breakthrough brought about a tremendous change in Scandinavian belles-lettres as far as the establishment of the realistic and naturalistic trends are concerned, but according to Lo-Johansson and his followers, the once so innovative literature had become stale and narrow in scope. In terms of literary history, the event of the collective novel in Scandinavia can therefore be understood as an outgrowth of the Modern Breakthrough. As will be pointed out later, the themes in the collective novels do not vary drastically from those suggested by

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Gunnar Brandell, Svensk litteratur 1870-1900. 2. Från första världskriget till 1950 (Stockholm: Aldus, 1975), p. 104.

Brandes in 1882, only the ideological approach has shifted further to the left. Besides, new narrative techniques have been created by the collective novelists to suit their particular ways of observing society in groups rather than in individuals.

Ivar Lo-Johansson called for a new realistic literature that would portray people as they function in groups within society, and not as individuals in search of themselves. Although he realized that the advent of naturalism had given rise to much discussion of modern society, he believed at the same time that this had been done in the name of individualism:

> Den svenska romanlitteraturen består i ett stort sett av de svenska författarnes självbiografier.... Ett ödesdigert svenskt talesätt har lanserat den uppfattningen, att varje person kan skrive åtminstone en roman, romanen om sig själv. Svenskerne har inte försummat försöket. [12]

He continues in the same article:

> Allt detta skrivande om sig själv är kanske ett försök att leka Strindberg, vilkens inflytande i det fallet varit ödesdigert för svensk litteratur. Vi behövde "avstrindbergisera." [13]

From Strindberg's foreword to Tjänstekvinnans son (1886), which was published separately, we know that this famous writer actually did foresee a new kind of realistic writing based on autobiographies.[14] He was particularly against the methods of Zola who had attempted to cover the life stories

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[12] Ivar Lo-Johansson, "Statarskolan i litteraturen," in his Statarskolan i litteraturen: Idéer och program (Göteborg: Författarförlaget, 1972), p. 20.

[13] Ibid., p. 21.

[14] August Strindberg, Tjänstekvinnans son in Samlade skrifter (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1920), XVIII, 457.

of a large group of people in the series of Les Rougon-Macquart. Strindberg did not believe that any one writer could come close to a true depiction of society by delving into a series of constructed lives. The alternatives for him would be either collections of autobiographies or simply the news media:

> Underklassen, som har sunt förstånd ibland, håller sig helst till fulla verkligheten och läser bara tidningen--eller äventyr. [15]

What Swedish novels needed was a "vertical" as well as a "broad" realistic representation of society, argued Lo-Johansson. Many areas of complex society were yet to be explored: "De olika miljöerna, samhällsavsnitten, yrkesgrupperna, folkrörelserna."[16] He asks furthermore:

> Var är industriarbetarnas epos, var är verkstadens epos, var är de moderna skogsarbetarnas i skoglandet Sverige? Vi har haft gruvdrift i snart tusen år, men var är våra gruvor epos?... Var finns den stora svenska samhällsromanen? [17]

The "modern" literature, which Brandes had called for in the eighties when naturalism came to the Scandinavian countries, had in other words come to a standstill. The new subject areas had been explored to a large degree, but still there was a need for a new approach that would deal with the many groups functioning within society.

In much the same way, Hans Kirk accused the writers in Denmark of working within a range of subjects that was too narrow for a modern society. In his lecture given at the

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[15]Ibid., p. 458.
[16]Lo-Johansson, p. 24.
[17]Ibid.

cultural conference of the Communist Party in 1948, he explains what he finds lacking in the current literature. In his opinion, the refined bourgeois culture never managed to get the attention of the masses:

> Indholdsmæssigt har den borgerlige litteratur det i almindelighed ikke [fået de brede masser i tale], fordi det gælder om den, som om 70ernes og 80ernes naturalistiske litteratur, at dens problemverden er for snæver. Og den er præget af en pessimisme, en mangel på håb og tro på tilværelsen, som har sin naturlige forklaring i det vesteuropæiske borgerskabs situation. Den tør ikke mere beskæftige sig med menneskers liv, med deres kampe og indre og ydre stræben. Enten beskæftiger den sig med rene særtilfælde, eller den giver udtryk for en dyster livsindstilling, som undertiden kan slå over i en desperat dødsdrift.[18]

Hans Kirk firmly believed, as Lo-Johansson did, that a different approach was necessary in literature in order to capture a larger audience. He did not suggest, however, any specific program as to which form this literature should take. As mentioned earlier, Kirk pointed out that the form ought to take shape according to the matter it contained, as long as a style was employed that people could understand.[19] Nevertheless, three of his novels, Fiskerne, Daglejerne, and De ny tider, conform very much to the program which Lo-Johansson suggested in 1938:

> Med kollektivens, massornas inträde i litteraturen måste också romanformen undergå en förändring. Den måste på ett eller annat sätt bli en kollektivroman. Typiseringar av massindivider är bara en halvmesyr och erbjuder inte så stor skillnad från den individualistiska romanen. I stället för, som förr,

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[18]Hans Kirk, "Litteraturen i dag," in Holdninger/miljøer/temaer i 25 års litterær debat: En antologi ved Erling Nielsen (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1975), p. 50.

[19]Ibid., p. 57.

> en normaltitel på en roman varit "Familjen på Sjögårda" eller liknande, bör titlar av typen "Massorna" framdeles bli de mest adekvata.[20]

The key word is here kollektivroman, but unfortunately the author did not describe in exact terms what he meant by this. From the same essay we can conclude, however, that the main point in this literature should be a focus on the masses and not on the individual. The masses had appeared in literature before, but Lo-Johansson perceived these tableaux as parts in choral plays where: "Massorna träder in, massorna yttrar sig, massorna går ut."[21]

In Lo-Johansson's terminology storrealism is also an important concept. The author contrasts it to lillrealism [sic] which is the mode that previous writers had made use of. Stor evidently implies a wide scope in subject-matter as opposed to the traditional stories of one person or of one family. Lillrealism, he argues, does not reach the depth and the range of the social topics present in society. The writers of the thirties ought to create a realism with an "inner" reality that explores broad topics of epic proportions, he continues. By "inner" reality Lo-Johansson means a type of literature that has been written by individuals who have experienced the subject-matter themselves. Only on those terms is it possible to attain a storrealism that will mirror the movements of the masses.

In summarizing Lo-Johansson's program for the novel of the future, four important concepts can thus be singled out.

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[20]Lo-Johansson, p. 25.
[21]Ibid., p. 26.

The first and most important is a concentration on the masses versus the individual; secondly, a change in mode from lillrealisme to storrealisme; thirdly, a preference for the working class versus the bourgeoisie in the choice of Stoff; and fourthly, an emphasis on an "inner" reality. In most of the collective novels to be discussed later, Lo-Johansson's first two concepts are present, while his preference for workers seems to be of a more personal choice. It is true, though, that all the Swedish writers of collective novels identified themselves as proletarian writers and followed Lo-Johansson's footsteps in dealing with their own class.[22] Storrealisme is the concept that appears to be the common denominator for all the novels in our genre, thus indicating broad topics including a large group of characters. Finally, when Lo-Johansson spoke about an "inner" reality in the new novels, he implied that the Stoff should somehow be a result of the writers' personal experiences. The Stoff had to be researched so that it would represent the real world. This inclination towards documentarism is apparent in all the collective novels whether the stories refer to actual historical situations, such as Josef Kjellgren's Människor kring en bro, or represent events that could have taken place given the specific social circumstances. H. C. Branner's Legetøj and Sigurd Hoel's En dag i oktober are examples of the latter category.

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[22]Graves, p. 127.

The ideas mentioned above capture, more or less, the essence of the new kind of novel that was to be called the collective novel in Scandinavia. Several of these novels have since been forgotten by the reading public, but critics of the sixties and seventies have taken a renewed interest in reevaluating the genre. The Danish scholar Sven Møller Kristensen gave a paper at The Fifth International Study Conference on Scandinavian Literature in 1964 entitled "Den kollektive roman," in which he briefly defines the genre:

> Definitionen på en sådan roman skulle være, at den omhandler en gruppe af mennesker, jævnbyrdige personer, som socialt hører sammen i kraft af erhverv og/eller bopæl (jfr. titler som Fiskerne, Daglejerne, Kontormennesker) og at kompositionen derved bliver en mosaik eller et fletværk af billeder, episoder, handlingsforløb og skæbner.[23]

The definition is divided into two parts, the first concerning the subject-matter, and the second dealing with the form. About the subject-matter the critic points out three characteristics: (i)The novel treats a group of people, who (ii) are of equal social status, and who (iii) constitute a social collective by virtue of employment or address or both. As far as the form is concerned, the collective novel is composed of a mosaic of various narrative approaches. This definition serves quite adequately as a common denominator for the list of Danish novels mentioned as examples of the genre. The only objection would be that the limited number of various social groups automatically would exclude similar types of novels

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[23]Møller Kristensen, p. 141.

written abroad, which we hope to incorporate in our own definition. The idea, that the group in the novel must consist of equal persons who form a social collective, would definitely leave out the novel about New York, Manhattan Transfer, or any other city novel for that matter.

Another critic, Janet Mawby, has proposed a definition of the genre. In her article "The Collective Novel and the Rise of Fascism in the 1930's," she suggests a definition that stresses the formal aspects rather than the Stoff. First she explains what "collective" means to her:

> As far as the form is concerned, the use of the word "collective" obviously indicates some kind of link between the different people described; but as well as being a small and confined group..., it can be a much more loosely knit community..., or a range of people linked by not knowing each other personally, but by reacting simultaneously to the same events.[24]

As examples of the three different groups, Janet Mawby mentions the ship's crew in Josef Kjellgren's Smaragden, the community in Lo-Johansson's Traktorn, and the second part of Ung må verden ennu være by Nordahl Grieg. In substituting the traditional protagonist with an entire group, an important question arises in regard to the structure of the novel. How can the group as such support the plot without creating confusion? In order to solve that problem, new narrative techniques will be necessary, so that the author can present the story in a coherent manner without a hero to aid him. Sven Møller Kristensen spoke about a mosaic or intertwining of episodes, action, and destinies, but Mawby

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[24] Mawby, p. 146.

elaborates on this and suggests methods as to how this could be achieved:

> The essential thing is that the novel itself should provide the links between the various characters, weaving them into a pattern or mosaic, and using devices such as repetition (e. g. two people thinking the same thought one after the other), simultaneity (the same event as it is observed or felt by people in different places at the same time), and "cutting," in which the first half of a sentence describes one character and the second half shifts almost imperceptibly to talk about another.[25]

The concepts of repetition, simultaneity, and "cutting" are important techniques for the writer of collective novels. Taken together with Jules Romains' concepts of <u>ensembles</u> and <u>simultanéité</u> (the latter term meaning the same as Mawby's simultaneity), we have some basic material for a further discussion of narrative techniques in a subsequent chapter.

Before continuing with other definitions of the genre, it might be useful to pause for a moment in order to discuss Romains' ideas on collectives in modern literature. Although the narrative techniques employed by him in some of his "unanimistic" novels coincide with those used in the Scandinavian collective novels, the point of departure in the subject-matter is slightly different. From a Marxist viewpoint, Hans Kirk wished for a proletarian literature that would explore the class society in a collective manner. Lo-Johansson wanted likewise a new approach to the realistic literature dealing with society, a literature that would transcend the individual and instead penetrate the social groups. Jules Romains also believed in an existence of

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[25]Ibid.

collective beings, but in contrast to the two Nordic writers, he did not perceive these collectives in socio-economic terms. The groups in Romains' first novels (Mort de quelqu'un and Les Copains) do not necessarily consist of people of equal status, but often of people just participating in the same event. Some critics, namely J. Mawby and T. Brostrøm, have referred to his unanimistic theory as being mystical and metaphysical,[26] which is certainly true in most cases. There is, however, a solid sociological basis for all of the groups in his novel Mort de quelqu'un which will be discussed later in more detail. The groups in this book vary from lodgers in an apartment building to a funeral procession which at particular moments will share a group spirit. The spirit will transcend that of each individual, and the group becomes unanimistic, that is "of one soul." It was not Romains' original idea to recognize these different groups in society and explore them in fictional writing.[27] Groups and group behaviour have been studied since the Greeks, but in modern times philosophers and sociologists like É. Durkheim and Gustave Le Bon have taken a renewed and more scientific approach to the subject.

Where the two above-mentioned Scandinavian writers of collective novels have defined their groups in terms of Marxist principles, Romains has made use of sociological definitions that do not necessarily include the concepts of

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[26]Ibid., p. 143; and Brostrøm, p. 125.
[27]P. J. Norrish, Drama of the Group: A Study of Unanimism in the Plays of Jules Romains (Cambridge: The University Press, 1958), p. 23.

class divisions. He did recognize, though, "an existence of collective beings that in history were re-achieving a new degree of consciousness."[28] As Lo-Johansson expressed in his program for Statarskolan, a new literature was in demand to meet the realities of modern society. Romains expresses the same idea:

> The importance given to collective realities, to human groups, to the more deeply perceived relations of the individual with his social surroundings, made it obligatory, especially in the novel, to seek a new type of construction. Without entering into the details of the new problems which had to be posed and solved and which would captivate only specialists, suffice it to say that the major difficulty consisted in a change of perspective, or if one prefer, a change in point of reference. It was necessary that the world, as evoked by the narrative, appear more independent of an individual conscience.[29]

In the following we will discuss a few other definitions of the collective genre proposed by Scandinavian critics during the past two decades. As far as the form of the novel is concerned, these critics have not added anything different from what already has been pointed out. In his article on the collective novel in Sweden, Peter Graves wrote in 1973 about the genre in much the same manner as Sven Møller Kristensen:

> No one character is permitted to dominate the scene, each comes into the foreground only when he has something to add to the fate of the group as a whole. The collective novel tends to consist of a mosaic of many small incidents and character portraits which fit together to provide a complete

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[28]Jules Romains, The Death of a Nobody, tr. Desmond MacCarthy and Sidney Waterlow. With a new introduction by the author, tr. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), p. iv.
[29]Ibid., p. vi.

> picture of a community over a certain, usually short period of time.[30]

The Faroese author William Heinesen created a few novels in the collective genre during the thirties, although W. Glyn Jones, an expert on Heinesen, considers only Noatun (1938) as being a true example of this specific genre. "In this book," Jones writes, "there is scarcely one of the characters who makes a particular profound impression on the reader."[31] He continues in the same article to compare the novel to the collective genre in general:

> This is entirely in keeping with what appear to be the principal aims of the author, to write what has come to be known as a collective novel, based on Marxist principles, in which the group rather than the individual is the basis of the action.[32]

The connection between Marxism and the collective novel has already been mentioned. An important point in this regard should be clarified before we resume the discussion on definitions. Hans Kirk was definitely a devoted Communist, and we can without hesitation interpret his novels from a Marxist viewpoint. Although Lo-Johansson was not a member of the Communist Party, he was an outspoken Socialist throughout his career. He identified himself as a proletarian writer and expressed solidarity with the working class. The case of Jules Romains is a little more difficult to interpret. According to Denis Boak, Jules Romains' attitude towards socialism was ambivalent all through his

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[30]Graves, p. 114.
[31]W. Glyn Jones, "Noatun and the Collective Novel," Scandinavian Studies, 41 (1969), 218.
[32]Ibid., p. 217.

productive years.[33] Apparently his sympathies in the years before 1914, while writing Mort de quelqu'un, were generally with the left, with the socialism of Jaurès. At the time of writing Manhattan Transfer, Dos Passos was definitely a progressive citizen with communist sympathies. In 1926 he became a member of the executive board of the New Masses, which was run by the communists, and through the following ten years he was active in various leftist orgnizations. During the thirties, however, disillusionment with the Communist Party became obvious both in his writing and political activities till he was finally driven to American conservatism after the Second World War.[34] Heinesen was not a Marxist either, although one would tend to label him left wing at the time of publishing Noatun. When Glyn Jones speakes about the collective novel as being based on Marxist principles, it should therefore not be interpreted as if all collective novels were written by Marxists. There is certainly a case for claiming that most of the writers were of leftist leanings at some point in their lives, including Dos Passos, and that their motivations for writing these novels had their basis in a certain political attitude.

In post-revolutionary Russia, on the other hand, we find a group of collective novels that have their roots in

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[33]Denis Boak, Jules Romains (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), p. 26.

[34]Granville Hicks, "The Politics of John Dos Passos," in Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention, ed. Allen Belkind (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), pp. 106-21.

socialist realism.[35] One example is The Iron Flood (1924) by A. Serafimovich in which the masses of the fleeing people take the role of the protagonist. Two other novels, namely Gladkov's Cement (1925) and Kataev's Time, Forward (1932) could be seen as parallels to the western collective novel. They both depict large sections of the people in a fashion similar to the "slice-of-life" portrait. Other similarities can be observed in the Stoff; for example, the depiction of cement plants in Kirk's Dagslejerne/De ny tider and Gladkov's novel. Formally speaking, Time, Forward and Cement differ on one point from their western counterparts, in that they have a leading protagonist, the Soviet hero, to form the basis of the plot. Furthermore, the concept of socialist realism is a very complex one and lies outside the area of research for this thesis. For our purposes we shall therefore consider the Russian collective novel as a parallel trend worthy of a lengthier study than space permits here.

Up to this point we have briefly discussed what has been meant as a collective novel as far as subject-matter and form are concerned. The definitions have clearly pointed out the necessary conditions and limitations, as each critic has perceived them. The formal explanations tend to cut across boundaries of the subject-matter, whereas the less formal seem to stress that aspect. In addition to these approaches we find a school of criticism that perceives the collective novel as a variation of samfundsskildringar

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[35]Edward Mozejko, Den socialistiske realisme (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1977), p. 26.

(portrayals of society) from an ideological viewpoint. The genre is here seen as a result of a changing structure within society and therefore within the literature that concerns itself with society.

The collective novel in Denmark has been viewed as a type of novel within the traditions of the realistic novel dating from the nineteenth century. In Ideologihistorie (1976) Lisbet Holst discusses this question under the heading Samfundsskildringer, where the society or the community (samfund means both society and community in Danish) are treated as independent subjects. In her view there is no ideological difference between Martin Andersen Nexø's Pelle Erobreren (1906-10) and the later collective novels.[36] In fact, she describes Pelle Erobreren as a collective novel which portrays the history of the proletariat. Nexø's novel does indeed give a very precise picture of the history of the working class, but at the same time it describes the life story of Pelle, the protagonist. That the critic is aware of this dual purpose of the novel is obvious from her and Knud Wentzel's joint study, "Solidaritet og individualitet: En analyse af Nexøs Pelle Erobreren" (1975). Instead of being a contradiction in terms, Wentzel emphasizes that there is no inconsistency in the novel being a collective novel and a Bildungsroman at the same time. He illustrates this with a neat diagram,

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[36]Lisbet Holst, Erik Skyum-Nielsen, and Knud Wentzel, Ideologihistorie IV: Fortællende digtning i Danmark 1870-1970 (Copenhagen: Tabula/Fremad, 1976), p. 35.

where the novel is subdivided into nothing less than ten different genres.[37]

From an ideological viewpoint, Nexø's novel can certainly be understood as a novel of collectives dealing with various social groups, that together form an important part of the history of the working class. The same is the case with Martin Koch's Arbetera: En historie om hat (1912), but in this book there is no real protagonist as in Pelle Erobreren. The difference lies in the structure of the novel. In the latter novel, the composition does not consist of a mosaic of portraits and episodes with equal emphasis on all characters, as is the case with Arbetera or Fiskerne. In fact the novel would fall apart structurally were Pelle removed from the plot. Like the Russian novels mentioned earlier, Pelle Erobreren is a proletarian novel, which analyzes the class society from a historical-materialistic viewpoint while the hero symbolizes the proletarian movement itself. Because of the leading protagonist, this book will not be included in our definition, although some knowledge of its portrayal of the community with its underlying ideologies would be of considerable help in understanding the genre as a whole.

While Holst recognizes the various novels from the period, i.e. the thirties in Denmark, as being types of

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[37]Knud Wentzel, "Solidaritet og individualitet," Meddelelser fra Dansklærerforeningen, 4 (1977), 375.

samfundsskildringer,[38] she hesitates to call them all collective novels. Daglejerne, Kontormennesker, Drejers Hotel, Fiskerne, Folk, Kolonien, etc., are unique in the sense that they do not have a single individual as a central topic, but a certain group or the entire society instead. For Holst this characteristic is not necessary in order that the novels might be labelled collective. In her definition ideology plays the important part.

> Man kunne forsåvidt--sådan som det også ofte bliver gjort--i denne brede betydning ligeså godt anvende betegnelsen kollektivroman. Det vil dog af flere, først og fremmest historiske, grunde være rimeligt at reservere betegnelsen kollektivroman til den bestemte type, der som Pelle Erobrerens 3. bog og som Fiskerne direkte eller indirekte har proletariatet som klasse som sit emne, og socialismen som teoretisk og politisk forudsætning. Den er--i noget forskellige udformninger--ikke blot den mest udbredte og holdbare kollektivform i perioden, men ved at rumme et egentligt alternativ til det nationale fællesskab, og dermed også et alternativt historiesyn, også den type der grundigst og mest bevidst omtolker den historiske romans emne.[39]

Although we agree that the collective novel offers a different and more modern interpretation of history than the earlier historical novel did, we do not believe that it should always depict the proletariat in doing so. As we know, Lo-Johansson also favoured the proletariat in his novels, since he believed it to be the social class where the contradictions of society were the most evident. However, Lo-Johansson at the same time wanted a broad and realistic picture of our modern western society, which is

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[38]Ibid.
[39]Holst, Ideologihistorie IV, p. 56.

hardly possible without the admission of other social classes. Furthermore, it should not be necessary to stipulate a theoretical and political framework in agreement with socialism, unless we decide to narrow down the genre to encompass revolutionary literature exclusively, which would result in a different kind of study. A third objection is that the definition does not rely on any formalistic aspects of the novel. In our opinion form should be one of the most important parts of a genre study.

What is important, though, in this last definition, is the emphasis on the alternative view of history. The new genre which we are attempting to define, is thus at the same time a variation of the social novel and a reinterpretation of the earlier historical novel. As far as the latter is concerned, it has for a while been considered as a genre of its own. From a rather formalistic conception of the genre, Warren and Wellek claim that the historical novel differs from other novel types in the nineteenth century in that it is not merely defined in terms of subject-matter, but "primarily because of the ties of the historical novel to the Romantic movement and to nationalism--because of the feeling about, attitude towards, the past which it implies." [40]

Numerous definitions have been suggested for the social novel. The one chosen here is taken from Warren French's book on the genre in the USA during the thirties. He

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[40]René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1956), p. 232.

describes the social novel in the following terms:

> A work that is so related to some specific historical phenomena that a detailed knowledge of the historical situations is essential to a full understanding of the novel at the same time that the artist's manipulation of his materials provides an understanding of why the historical events involved occurred. The events may, like those connected with the Spanish Civil War or the Okie migration, be specifically identifiable, or they may be invented to typify kinds of occurrences like strikes or lynchings that pose grave social problems.[41]

With the above-mentioned statements on the historical and social novels in mind, we get a better comprehension of what is meant by an alternative view of history in Holst's explanation of collective novels. The key word is "understanding." As Holst writes, the understanding of society has changed drastically in Denmark since the late nineteenth century. The writers have since 1870 become more conscious of the material and human forces in society, and do not any longer conceive of their environment as a part of a moral and stable universe as was the case during the Romantic era. The men of letters began to understand and reveal the real social forces working within society, although not always in a conscious manner, that is, in a conscious historical-materialistic way, as Kirk did in his novels. As Holst sees it, the developing consciousness of the material and human forces creates a basis for the new portraits of society that depict the various groups rather than the individuals in the community.

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[41]Warren French, The Social Novel at the End of an Era (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, Feffer and Simons, 1967), p. 7.

In comparing these views to Brandes' lectures delivered in 1871 dealing with the new type of committed literature, we can see a direct line in ideological development. From a literature that was mainly a reaction against Romanticism during the Modern Breakthough, the new realistic and naturalistic trends became a literature that concentrated on a discussion of social problems. The collective novel in Scandinavia can thus be understood as an expansion of the type of literature that emerged during the late nineteenth century with a steadily increasing emphasis on society.

The waves that had begun to reach Scandinavia during the Modern Breakthrough had already been flowing in the rest of Europe for some time. Brandes was by no means an inventor of a new literary concept, but only a spokesman for ideas on realism and naturalism that had swept through the western hemisphere for a century. In his analysis of American Naturalism, Charles Child Walcutt points out that the advent of naturalism in literature was only an affirmation of a slow development of philosophical, scientific, and historical events that had taken place since the beginning of the nineteenth century.[42] Newton, Comte, Darwin, Spencer, and Marx had already lived and died, and sooner or later their thoughts and discoveries would necessarily infiltrate the realm of fiction. It is a known fact, however, that Auguste Comte's Positivism combined with Darwin's and

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[42] Charles Child Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 7-8.

Spencer's theories of natural and social evolution, respectively, did not become a part of a literary doctrine until the publication of Émile Zola's Le Roman expérimental in 1880. Since then, no writer could possibly ignore the presence of naturalism in literature, including the collective novelists to be discussed in the following chapter.

John Dos Passos has been viewed as a very important figure in the development of naturalism in USA. Walcutt perceives his writing as an end-point in the evolution of naturalistic forms that began to appear in the late nineteenth century.[43] As many of his predecessors, Dos Passos was an explorer of American society and in particular of the social forces shaping communities. But unlike Theodore Dreiser, for example, Dos Passos developed a technique which focused on the sociological and political dimensions of the whole of society rather than on the development of individuals. Due to his innovative technique and broad subject-matter, Dos Passos' novel Manhattan Transfer has been labeled "a panoramic novel," "a cross section," "a slice of life," "a synoptic novel," "a collectivistic novel," "a caleidoscopic novel," and finally "a collective novel."[44]

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[43]Ibid., p. 280.

[44]Ibid., p. 280. See also:
George J. Becker, John Dos Passos (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1974), p. 41;
Blanche Housman Gelfant, "John Dos Passos: The Synoptic Novel," in Dos Passos: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Andrew Hook (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 36-41;

The latter term is yet to be discussed, as one critic, Malcolm Cowley, only applies it to the later novels by Dos Passos, the USA-trilogy, whereas we believe it to characterize Manhattan Transfer quite satisfactorily. Essentially, what each critic means by his or her special label is that the novel is a piece of fictional narrative which (i) is plotless in the Aristotelian sense,[45] (ii) which has a whole society in the place of the traditional protagonist,[46] and (iii) in which the author explores the complexity of the social nexus.[47]

The most celebrated statement on Manhattan Transfer is that of Sinclair Lewis, Dos Passos' contemporary and author of Main Street and Babbitt. It was first published in The Saturday Review of Literature in 1925 and is one of the few enthusiastic reviews at the time which celebrated the arrival of a new type of story-telling. Lewis states among many important things, that "probably Mr. Dos Passos' greatest feat is to have escaped from the auto-biographical ego-mongering which afflicts most of the young novelists." It was apparently not only in provincial Scandinavia that the self-searching novel was to be criticized by more radical novelists. Lewis continues in much the same

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[44](cont'd) Malcolm Cowley, "John Dos Passos: The Poet and the World," in Dos Passos: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 80;
Allen Belkind, Introduction to Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention, p. xxi.
[45]Joseph Warren Beach, American Fiction 1920-1940 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 47.
[46]Belkind, Introduction to Dos Passos p. xxxiv.
[47]Beach, p. 41.

sarcastic manner as Lo-Johansson in Sweden:

> In America and in England alike, these young aspirants write, again and again, the same story in the same way, and this is the chart of that tale: A young man is (a) on a farm, (b) in the household of a father zealously given to finance and to scorn for Art, (c) on a newspaper with a cruel city editor, or (d) in a university, preferably Yale or Harvard, Oxford or Cambridge. Wherever he is, he discovers with bleating dismay that many rough rude persons do not perceive that he is a genius.[48]

Sinclair Lewis admits that Dos Passos is not entirely free of this kind of "intriguing plot" in his otherwise excellent novel. Jimmy Herfer is, of course, a rejected journalist who eventually leaves the city for a more satisfactory life elsewhere. This character's fate, however, plays only a small part in the complex network of happenings in the gigantic city. Manhattan Transfer is far from being a Bildungsroman with the subtitle "The Poet and the World," which Malcolm Cowley insists upon.[49]

Directing our attention towards French literature, and especially that of Jules Romains, we will find that he also turned away from the Bildungsroman. In all his works Romains shunned stories of individual lives as well as family sagas. His aim was first and foremost to describe a society on its own merits. This he evidently achieved in the impressive twenty-seven volume work Les Hommes de bonne volonté. In his introduction to this roman-fleuve (that is, a multi-volume

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[48]Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer (New York: Harper Brothers, 1926), p. 16.
[49]Cowley, p. 79.

novel, such as Les Thibault by Martin du Gard),[50] Romains points out the weaknesses of the biographical approach in a narrative which is at the same time meant to portray society. In novels that are devoted to stories about individual heroes or clans (e. g. Madame Bovary, The Forsyte Saga, and Buddenbrooks), Romains believes that the presentation of society will necessarily be partial and completely coloured by the hero's observations and thoughts. The vision of the world will thus be reduced to the boundaries imposed by his experiences.[51] Romains writes:

> Mais il devient une survivance, quand le sujet véritable est la société elle-même, ou un vaste ensemble humain, avec une diversité de destinées individuelles qui y cheminent chacune pour leur compte, en s'ignorant la plupart du temps, et sans se demander s'il ne serait pas plus commode pour le romancier qu'elles allassent toutes se rencontrer par hasard au même carrefour.[52]

Les Hommes de bonne volonté and the USA-trilogy by Dos Passos present many similarities as mentioned by Ben Stoltzfus.[53] In our definition they both belong to the collective genre, but they will not be discussed any further here due to the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, it is in our interest to examine early works of the genre in order to capture the spontaneity of the new experiment. Thus Fiskarne, Manhattan Transfer, and Mort de quelqu'un are the first collective novels written by their respective authors.

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[50]Boak, p. 170.
[51]Jules Romains, Introduction to Les Hommes de bonne volonté (Paris: Flammarion, 1958), I, 7.
[52]Ibid., p. 9.
[53]Ben Stoltzfus, "John Dos Passos and the French," in Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention, pp. 197-218.

To our knowledge these novels also represent the first attempts in this genre in Denmark, USA, and France.

The various definitions surveyed above have proven to be inconsistent and at times contradictory with one another. On the one hand, literary historians have restricted the collective novel to mean a special narrative form where the traditional protagonist has disappeared and where the composition is based on a mosaic of portraits and incidents. On the other hand, some critics believe the collective novel to belong to a genre which has developed from the Romantic historical novel to a modern social novel dealing with society in a historical-materialistic manner. In the latter case, the form is subordinated to the subject-matter and the author's world view. The list of novels mentioned as examples of the collective genre by different critics is quite extensive. Some Scandinavian novels have already been analyzed by these critics, e.g. H. C. Branner's Legetøj, Sigurd Hoel's Sesam Sesam (1938),[54] Heinesen's Noatun,[55] and Kirk's Fiskerne.[56] Furthermore, parallels have been drawn to similar types of novels abroad, some of which we have mentioned in the introduction to this thesis.

To conclude this chapter, we will list the various aspects of what we believe to be a collective novel. At the time of Plato the theory of genres referred to two distinctly different modes of reproducing people and things:

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[54] Mawby, pp. 154-61.
[55] Jones, "Noatun and the Collective Novel," pp. 217-30.
[56] Elias Bredsdorff, "Marx og Freud i Hans Kirk's roman Fiskerne, in Ideas and Ideologies, pp. 241-61.

the mimetic or imitative mode and the descriptive mode. Thus dramatic poetry and the epic were two different genres. Throughout the centuries the various literary genres have changed and intermingled, and in keeping with these changes, genre theoreticians have had to modify the original concept of genre. With the growing popularity of the novel in the past two centuries, scholars have experienced great difficulties in defining this new hybrid literary genre. The many sub-types of the novel have complicated matters further, even to the extent that many scholars have felt it necessary to classify novels according to subject-matter, thus the psychological novel, the novel of manners, the novel of the soil, the political novel, the regional novel, etc..[57] We tend to agree with Wellek and Warren, who write in their Theory of Literature:

> Genre should be conceived as a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific metre or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose - more crudely, subject and audience). The ostensible basis may be one or the other..., but the critical problem will then be to find the other dimension, to complete the diagram. [58]

In the case of the collective novel, the most obvious characteristic is the lack of an individual hero, which in turn gives the novel a peculiar outer form. Most of the critics discussed above would agree with this statement. The more subtle problem lies in characterizing the so-called

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[57]William Flint Thrall, Addison Hibbard, and C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 323.
[58]Wellek and Warren, p. 231.

inner form. If one is to accept all the novels mentioned in the examples as being of the collective genre, several problems will arise in attempting to describe a common attitude, tone, and purpose. From a theoretical standpoint, the two definitions proposed by Janet Mawby and Lisbet Holst respectively, would lack either one or the other of the two generic criteria explained in Wellek and Warren's statement. More precisely, Mawby allows for a wide variety of collectives in the novels, irrespective of the inner purpose of the works, while Holst only considers novels within a very strict ideological frame of reference. In our own definition, we propose a combination of the two extreme views.

A collective novel deals with at least one group of people to the exclusion of an individual protagonist. For this reason, neither Lykke-Per by Henrik Pontoppidan, Ting by Herman Bang, Martin A. Nexø's Pelle Erobreren, nor Sinclair Lewis' Main Street will qualify. As far as the outer form is concerned, critics have used the term "mosaic" to describe the appearance of a segmented structure, as the narrator changes his direction from individual to individual within the group. The analogy is serviceable, but we prefer to think of literature in terms of the dimension of time. "Mosaic" is originally a word used in the pictorial arts within the limitations of two spacial dimensions, which does not readily apply to the realm of literature, as it, like music, progresses in time. If we think of a traditional

novel in terms of a "linear dramatic form that leads from a beginning through a succession of conflicts and crises to an end,"[59] this can also be applied to the collective novel with some modifications of the two concepts of linear and dramatic form. In reading a collective novel, we often get the impression of discontinuity, as the narrator proceeds to relate simultaneous events. Instead of following the voice of one integrated character with whom we can identify, such as Pelle Erobreren or Carol Kennicott, the reader constantly has to adjust to the sound of many different voices in order to conceive the overall picture. The word "polyphonic" could be used to characterize this form of group description where the voices sometimes sound in harmony, in that they relate to each other in a natural way, and at other times appear to have nothing at all to do with the general progression of the plot. One of the formal differences between the collective novel and the so-called monumental novel, such as War and Peace, is the rhythm of the linear time progression. Edwin Muir points out that in War and Peace:

> ...[time] is not so much articulated as generalized and averaged. Its speed is not determined by the intensity of the action; it has, on the contrary, a cold and deadly regularity, which is external to the characters and unaffected by them. The characters grow, or grow old. The emphasis is on that; on the fact that they are twenty now, that they will be thirty, then forty, then fifty, and that in essential respects they will then be like everybody else at twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty.[60]

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[59]Gerald Warner Brace, The Stuff of Fiction (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), p. 60.

[60]Edwin Muir, The Structure of the Novel (London: The Hogarth Press, 1967), p. 98.

In the collective novel, on the other hand, the time dimension is characterized by a fast, but irregular pace which is interrupted by "breadthwise"[61] depictions of simultaneous happenings.

The irregularity of the linear form is a result of the peculiar type of plot in the collective novel. The plot is essentially void of any suspense, and at times almost nonexistent. At the most, we can describe the average plot in the collective novel as a change that is taking place within a social community, or as an entire society in a state of transition.

In turning to the inner aspect of the novel, subject-matter and audience are important concepts. What kind of issues do the collective novels deal with, and what kind of expectations does the reader have? These are vital questions to be discussed, as they will clarify the issues concerning the purpose and meaning of the works in this genre. The collective novel is in most cases not read for its depth psychology; neither is it enjoyed for purely aesthetic reasons. The plot is rather unexciting in the majority of the novels, and the characterizations are often flat. The primary purpose of the collective novel seems to be to inform. The author's intention appears to show a piece of social history, as he perceives it, enacted by various groups within society. The tone is usually cool and matter-of-fact, as the author is striving for objectivity.

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[61]Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel: Studies in Technique (New York: The Century Co., 1932), p. 425.

One exception might be Manhattan Transfer which is, aesthetically speaking, very exciting.

Furthermore, the groups in questions are not just any kind of gatherings. The group always has some sociological reasons for its existence and does not exist solely in the mind of the author in order for him to exploit a philosophical problem. For this reason Wilder's novel The Bridge of San Luis Rey does not qualify as a collective novel. In order to classify Wilder's novel, it might be necessary at this point to take a closer look at what sociologists mean by a "group." Any gathering of people who happen to be at the same place at the same time, is what is known as an aggregate or a collectivity.[62] This type of grouping hardly has any literary potential, unless the crowd for a period of time is being transformed into a so-called primary "group." This latter type is characterized by physical proximity, small size, and durability. In addition, a depth of emotional tone must be present among the members of the primary group. This transformation of groups has often been explored as a theme in the novels of Jules Romains, and occasionally in the Scandinavian collective novels, as for example in Sigurd Hoel's En dag i oktober. The five victims in Wilder's novel could for a brief moment be conceived of as an aggregate changing into a primary

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[62]Rodney Stark et al., Society Today, 2nd ed. (Del Mar: Ziff-Davis, 1973), p. 129. See also:
David Popenoe, Sociology, 3rd. ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp. 60-65.
Imogen Seger, Sociology for the Modern Mind, tr. by author (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 86.

group at the moment of the bridge collapsing; but since the author's intention is to produce doubt in the mind of the reader as to the sociological reasons for the five people being on the bridge, the aggregate does not constitute a primary group. The question that Wilder poses in his book is whether these unfortunate people were not predestined to die together because of their newly found love of their fellow men. A parallel to the life of Christ is suggested, in which death has a redeeming quality. At any rate, the purpose of the novel is purely philosophical-religious, and it should therefore belong to an entirely different genre, according to our previous discussion on generic theory.

As far as the general sociological "group" is concerned, this word is reserved for the following:

> A collection of people who are involved in some organized and recurrent pattern of interaction. A group consists of some recognized set of rules and norms. Furthermore, groups are oriented toward some set of goals (whether the goals involve starting a revolution or simply enjoying friendship and play). Because of shared goals and recurrent interaction among members, groups give rise to a sense of belonging or solidarity among participants. Thus groups have at least a vague notion of the boundary that distinguishes members from nonmembers. For a collection of persons to constitute a group in the sociological sense, members must perceive that they share a collective existence and common aims. [63]

The greater majority of the Scandinavian collective novels deal with this type of grouping, as in Kirk's novels, the Faroese writer William Heinesen's Noatun (1938), the Swedish

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[63]Stark, p. 129.

proletarian novels,[64] and parts of the Norwegian Johan Falkberget's trilogy Christianus Sextus (1927).

A more difficult kind of collective to define is the one present in John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer (1925), Knut Hamsun's Segelfoss by (1915), H. C. Branner's Legetøj (1936), Martin A. Hansen's Nu opgiver han (1935), and Lo-Johansson's Traktorn (1943). The large groups in each of these novels hardly give the impression of solidarity or belonging. Because of the social structure within each of the communities, and the author's interpretation of the social system, the various characters are often opposed to their group identity. Instead they form smaller groups that each pursues its own interests. An extreme case is Manhattan Transfer, where small groups often are formed only to be quickly destroyed. In the case of Mort de quelqu'un, the collectives differ from those in both Fiskerne and Manhattan Transfer. Groups are formed when a man dies, and they only exist as long as the social norms require their presence. The novel is a sociological and a psychological study of group behaviour as a result of social conventions. The same kind of group study can be found in Hoel's En dag i oktober. In this regard, Romains' novel is of a more universal character than the two social novels by Kirk and Dos Passos, i.e. Fiskerne and Manhattan Transfer, both of which are based on specific historical epochs in specific localities. Of the three novels to be analyzed in the subsequent

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[64]See Graves, "The Collective Novel in Sweden", p. 114.

chapter, each represents one of the three above mentioned categories within the collective genre.

III. FISKERNE, MANHATTAN TRANSFER, AND MORT DE QUELQU'UN: PLOT AND CHARACTERIZATION

> Of all plots and actions the epeisodic [sic] are the worst. I call a plot 'epeisodic' in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence. Bad poets compose such pieces by their own fault, good poets, to please the players; for, as they write show pieces for competition, they stretch the plot beyond its capacity, and are often forced to break the natural continuity. [65]

A. Plot:

In the collective novel there is no chief actor in the formal sense of the word. There is no picaro as in Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, nor a self-confessional individual like Roquentin in Jean-Paul Sartre's Nausée. We will search in vain to find a central character whose life and development we can follow in detail, such as Emma Bovary, Jeanne in Une Vie by Maupassant, Effi Briest, or Anna Karenina. Nevertheless, there is the occasional hero in the collective novel. Cilius, the union leader in Kirk's Daglejerne/De ny tider, is a heroic figure who changes his life style completely to support the workers' cause. The young idealistic worker Pelle in Koch's Arbejere is likewise an outstanding

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[65] Aristotle, quoted from S. H. Butcher's translation Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art: With a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), p. 37.

character whose behaviour we pay special attention to. In Manhattan Transfer the newspaper man Jimmy Herf takes on heroic proportions as he refuses to make further compromises in the mad world of the city. The famous critic Malcolm Cowley actually sees this novel as a story about "the poet and the world" with Herf in the center of the action.[66] Similarly, Niels Peter in Noatun is clearly a leader of the group, which has motivated the English translator Jan Noblel to change its title to Niels Peter (1940).[67]

Yet, these "heroes" are just members of a larger group where they seldom have the opportunity to dominate the stage for more than a moment. The writer of the collective novel presents us with the alternative of a group which in turn gives rise to at least two technical problems. One is the question of identification and involvement on the part of the reader, and another is the difficulties concerning plot progression and characterization. We will begin our discussion of the latter complex problem by turning to Fiskerne first, and then compare our findings to the plots of Manhattan Transfer and Mort de quelqu'un. Finally we hope to clarify some of the questions concerning the reader's involvement or lack of it in these collective novels.

Plot and character are clearly very important aspects of narrative fiction, and scholars have for a long time paid

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[66]Cowley, "John Dos Passos: The Poet and the World," pp. 76-87.

[67]Jones, "Noatun and the Collective Novel," p. 217.

much attention to their interdependency. For this chapter we have surveyed mostly Anglo-American works on the theoretical aspects of the novel, E. M. Forster being the earliest (1927), and Scholes and Kellogg's The Nature of Narrative (1966) one of the more recent. Nearly all these works investigate the concepts of plot and character in various novels up to the beginning of this century, but none of them have included a discussion of either the so-called plotless novels or the ones lacking a protagonist.

In a book dated 1969 designed for writers-to-be, the following statement is made:

> It seems axiomatic that all plot, all action, should begin with at least one interesting character. The ideal plot derives from character.... The test of success, however, is still the interesting individual, the one with whom we can identify, or who magnetizes us in some way.[68]

In a perceptive definition of plot, R. S. Crane relies as well on the existence of a protagonist:

> There are, thus, plots of action, plots of character, and plots of thought. In the first, the synthesizing principle is a completed change, gradual or sudden, in the situation of the protagonist, determined and effected by character and thought (as in Oedipus and The Brothers Karamazov); in the second, the principle is a completed process of change in the moral character of the protagonist, precipitated or molded by action, and made manifest both in it and in thought and feeling (as in James's The Portrait of a Lady); in the third, the principle is a completed process of change in the thought of the protagonist and consequently in his feelings, conditioned and directed by character and action (as in Pater's Marius the Epicurean).[69]

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[68]Brace, p. 51.

[69]R.S. Crane, "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones" in Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern, ed. R. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p.620.

In the following we will search for alternative ways of defining plot in relation to character.

The numbers of characters making up the various casts differ from novel to novel. In Fiskerne we are introduced to six fishermen with their families and some twenty named characters of secondary importance. The entire cast of Manhattan Transfer amounts to more than eighty named characters and several that are unnamed. Besides the dead person in Mort de quelqu'un, the collective there numbers about twenty members. In these novels of average length (Manhattan Transfer being the only one to exceed 400 pages), where there are no predominating characters, there is clearly a unifying force in the collectives themselves.

In 1927 E. M. Forster invented in 1927 the term "flat" characters to describe people in fiction of two dimensions with little or no flexibility.

> In their purest form, they are constructed round a single idea or quality; when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round. [70]

The collective novels have a large number of these flat characters. This phenomenon seems to be the result of the group orientation. The impression upon the reader is that the author never seeks to explore the depths of individual souls, but rather to demonstrate how individuals function within groups, and in turn how the groups affect individuals. Yet, each individual in the collectives is not

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[70] E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel and Related Writings, Abinger ed. (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 47.

an unchanging monolith from the beginning to the end of the story. As mentioned by Scholes and Kellogg, "Characters in primitive stories are invariably flat. Odysseus, for example, always seems to do the right thing, whatever the situation requires."[71]

This is not quite the case with the group members in the collective novel. They change to a certain degree, but in relationship to the norms imposed on them by the group. In this respect we can speak of an element of determinism, although in a different sense from what is usually understood by naturalistic determinism. Hippolyte Taine and his disciples believed in the determining forces of heredity, milieu, and the specific moment in a person's life to shape his or her existence. In the collective novel, each group functions within its own defined framework, and in turn the characters' fates are viewed within the specific group perspective. However slight the change might appear in a character, the outcome is determined by the group demands, pressures, and peer-modelling.

It is questionable whether the collective novels in general can be classified as naturalistic works in the spirit of Taine's philosophy and Zola's theories in Le Roman expérimental, which stress observation and the controlled scientific experiment in fiction.[72] At the same time some pseudo-scientific methods are present in the laborious

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[71]Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (1966; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 164.

[72]Walcutt, pp. 32-33.

preparatory research done by the collective novelists who believe in an "inner" reality, that is, self-experienced raw material. A tendency to list technical paraphernalia is another technique in the collective novel akin to Zolaesque "authentic" descriptions,[73] which later reappears in the modern report novel of the thirties (Upton Sinclair, Ernst Ottwalt) as this is defined by Georg Lukacs.[74] In addition to the bare facts, other modern approaches to the riddle of human behaviour like depth psychology, existentialism, and behaviourism as exemplified in Marxist theories, are likewise at work in the collective novel.[75]

Turning to the plot of Fiskerne for a moment, it is apparent that it encompasses the total sum of the conflicts and crises evoked by the different groups, as each of them is struggling for survival and expansion. At first sight the plot might appear to consist of a string of incidents that happen to various characters in the different groups. The mosaic pattern would then be the most suitable metaphor to use in describing the constant shifting from character to character, and from incident to incident. For this reason, the collective novel has been compared to an impressionistic painting, comprised of many individual strokes each of which

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[73] Ibid., p. 35.

[74] Georg Lukacs, "Reportage oder Gestaltung? Kritische Bemerkungen anlässlich eines Romans von Ottwalt" in Marxismus und Literatur: Eine Dokumentation in drei Bänden, ed. Fritz J. Raddatz (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1972), II, 150-58.

[75] Bredsdorff, p. 241, and Sidney Finkelstein, "Sociological and Literary Depiction of Alienation," in his Existentialism and Alienation in American Literature (New York: International Publishers, 1967), pp. 136-64.

contributes to the meaning of the whole. It is our contention that the plot in the collective novel is not merely the sum of all the narrative parts, whether these are incidents, descriptions, or characterizations.

The French structuralist Gérard Genette makes a distinction between the recounted story, l'histoire, that is, an abstraction from the actual narrative discourse (le récit), and la narration which is the way the account is presented or organized.[76] We are not too concerned here with the actual récit as it appears in the collective novels, but are far more curious about the abstracted story, and to some degree the author's narration. In a complex novel, however, the story is not always easily recognizable. E. M. Forster discusses this problem in a much more conservative and straightforward manner than his scientifically oriented colleagues among the structuralists. Basically Forster separates the simple story from the more complex plot. To him plot gives the story intellectual meaning: "We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality."[77] In the following we will attempt to sort out the plot as defined by Forster from the simple story in Fiskerna, Manhattan Transfer, and Mort de

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[76]Robert Scholes, Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction (London: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 165.
[77]Forster, p. 60.

quelqu'un respectively.

In Kirk's first novel we are presented with three groups. The introductory line, "Der stod en lille flok," refers to a group of fishermen who for economic reasons are in the process of moving from one place to another. The people are quickly introduced by the narrator: Povl Vrist, Anton Knopper, Lars Bundgaard, Jens Røn, Laust Sand, and Thomas Jensen. Their families arrive shortly after, and the wives are likewise mentioned by name. The goal for this group is obviously to improve its standard of living, and at the same time to avoid the great risks involved in working on the rough sea.

With subtle hints, the narrator reveals already on the first pages that some of these people have other things in common than economic hardship. One of the techniques he employs is a kind of biblical language in a collective interior monologue. This device is frequently used throughout the novel and can first be detected on the second page: "Nej, de havde langt til støvets år, og ingen af dem kom vel til at lide nød. Gud havde nok en udvej for dem, og uden ham gaves ingen jordisk fremgang, det vidste man tilfulde."[78] Furthermore, Jens Røn's wife Tea is worried about their future in the new village, and she relates her anxiety, which is a feeling shared by the group, about the villagers' religious attitude: "Hvordan var nu de mennesker, man skulle stedes iblandt... hvad var alverdens herlighed,

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[78]Hans Kirk, Fiskerne (Copenhagen: Gyldendals tranebøger, 1975), p. 6.

om man ikke havde Jesus i sit hjerte."[79] We soon learn that most of the group members belong to the religious sect, Indremission, which makes up the second social group.

It turns out that the religious group and the work group do not altogether coincide. Povl Vrist and Mariane do not belong to the former group, whereas several "outsiders" pay their allegiance to the sect, for example Pastor Thomsen from the west coast, the young and zealous Pastor Terndrup, Peder Hygum the charlatan, old Esben from Dødemandshuset, and the teacher Aaby. Other villagers soon join the ranks of the fishermen, not as members of the religious community, but as workers with the same economic interests.

For the "saved" group members, the most important rule in life is to remain holy and faithful to their interpretation of the Script. In the new and uncertain environment, however, there are many temptations which the members are quite aware of. As Thomas Jensen says: "Når [folk] kom mellem vantro, kølnedes deres egen tro."[80] The second important goal for this group is revealed in a dream to the same Thomas Jensen, much reminiscent of the biblical dreams where God appears to various people: "Gud manede ham at tage vækkelsesarbejdet op for at frelse de sjæle, som ellers skulle fortabes."[81] A program aimed towards the expansion of the sect is now designed by the members, who are hoping for nothing less than a total conversion of all

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[79]Ibid., p. 7.
[80]Ibid., p. 36.
[81]Ibid.

the people in the area. The building of their own temple, Missionshuset, will thus symbolize their victory.

The third group in question constitutes the entire village, including the farmers, the grocer, the baker, the innkeeper, the minister, the customs officer, the fishermen, and several others. The goal is in this case the survival of the village as a self-sufficient community, and is thus similar to the unifying factor in Segelfoss by by Hamsun and Noatun by Heinesen.

The three collectives have their own goals and are guided by different rules. The plot of the novel therefore progresses along three lines according to the events taking place within each group. In the group defined in socio-economic terms, the goal achievements are manifested in several incidents. Povl Vrist's increasing prosperity, which is slowly spreading to the other members, is a positive step towards improved living conditions. Vrist remains the leading man in terms of material wealth, and for the other fishermen he represents the ultimate achiever of financial security and material comfort. The ups and downs in the fishing seasons due to natural causes likewise play an important role in the families' lives. In terms of the narrative plot, the time sequence is spread over seven years, each year divided into fishing seasons. Spring is the time when the herring arrives, and the ground nets are being placed in deep water. In the late summer, after the agricultural harvest, the fishermen get busy preparing the

eel-traps for the profitable eel-catch during the fall. The winter is a quiet time with the occasional ice fishing, and is in general the season devoted mostly to spiritual endeavours.

The numerous passages dedicated to work descriptions are very interesting from a sociological viewpoint, as they add a documentary aspect to the novel. Since the collective novel is a type of social novel where the reader must know the particulars about the social situation narrated, in order to fully understand the meaning of the work, a certain quantity of documentation is necessary. In Fiskerne this aspect has been woven into the plot, and in particular assimilated with the story line evolving from the socio-economic group.[82]

The crisis within this plot development is manifested in the violent battle that takes place between the fishermen and another group from the southern bank of the fjord. The dispute involves the fishing rights to a specific territory, which in the past had proven to be rich in eel. Failing to reach a settlement in a peaceful manner, both parties take to violent measures. The incident is important, as economic questions take precedence over the religious commitments in the narration. Guilt feelings do arise after the incident, but for the duration of the actual battle, the group members only perceive the issue as a question of economic rights. Solidarity is more pronounced than ever before or after the

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[82]Examples of work descriptions can be found in Fiskerne, p. 89 and p. 202, where the fishermen prepare eel traps.

confrontation. Even the women participate in the collective work with the help of some villagers. An agreement is finally reached to the advantage of the sectarian fishermen.

As a dénouement, the purchase of the radio by Mariane Vrist towards the end of the novel, symbolizes the materialistic goals that they all had been fighting for. The group is finally established in the new place, and "jævn velstand rådede i alle huse."[83]

In the second collective, which we will call Missionen,[84] the rules by which the members are guided, basically represent the ten commandments. Evidently their worst enemy is the unavoidable sex drive which leads several of the members to commit sinful acts, not to speak of unclean thoughts. Dancing, drinking, and cheerful pictorial decorations are all group taboos which inevitably will lead

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[83]Ibid., p. 237.

[84]The Inner Mission and the movement led by the theologian-historian N. F. S. Grundtvig, who also initiated the Danish Folk High Schools, were both offshoots of the official Danish National Church (Den danske folkekirke), and they were at first directed against the invasion of foreign free-churches and sects during the 1830's and 1840's. The two movements grew further and further apart and were often in total opposition to each other, as for example is the case in Fiskerne. Grundtvig and his followers promoted an independent attitude towards the Bible as well as participation in all community matters. Where Grundtvigianerne believed in a constant interaction between the religious and secular aspects of society, the Inner Mission turned towards the Word of the Bible and saw it their call of duty to awaken those who had lived in sin. Intolerance and prejudice often resulted from the Mission's strong devotion, whereas Grundtvig's followers are usually described as an outgoing and down-to-earth group (Roar Skovmand, Folkestyrets fødsel: 1830-1870, Vol. XI of Danmarks historie, eds. John Danstrup and Hal Koch (Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag, 1978), pp. 399-412.) The contrast is brought out in the characters of Mariane and Tea.

each individual into conflicts with the group norms. In one instance this conflict leads to death, as both Laust Sand and his step-daughter Adolphine commit suicide after having lived in a secret common-law relationship. Furthermore, the forty-year-old bachelor Anton Knopper, who is expected to live a clean life devoid of sex, is repeatedly caught by the narrator in having experiences with Freudian implications. The entire novel is saturated with incidents that show the contradictions between fanatic religious morals and the people's instincts for pleasurable things. Elias Bredsdorff has thoroughly analyzed the relationship between suppressed instincts and perverted behaviour present in Fiskerne. He has also proved Kirk's knowledge of Freudian theories with ample documentation from Kirk's earlier articles. [85] What is relevant to us at this point, is how the author has used psychological theories to describe how group pressure can shape the behaviour of individuals.

The conflicts between the Mission and the outsiders are manifested in a power struggle against the parish minister Brink and his followers who are Grundtvigianere. From the time of Thomas Jensen's first visit with Brink,[86] where the two religious parties are in sharp opposition to each other, until the minister's final resignation, we are exposed to a constant struggle.

Each individual family undergoes difficult times, whenever the faith is at stake, but as a collective the main

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[85] Bredsdorff, pp. 241-61.
[86] Kirk, Fiskerne, p. 41.

crisis in their religious lives is one dreadful winter after the establishing of fishing rights. For several months after the battle with the fishermen on the southern bank, who incidentally belong to the same religious sect, there is a very poor harvest at the annual eel catch. The Mission can only interpret this as God's punishment. When spring brings them an abundance of fish, however, they all know that the Lord only wanted to test their faith.

The third collective in question encompasses the entire village as opposed to the strange big neighbouring town with its different use of language, its customs, its employments, and its many temptations. The narrator comments that the village is a place where "de store bevægelser var gået udenom."[87] Incidentally, he sounds much like Brandes when this scholar spoke about little Denmark where literature had remained untouched by the big movements in Europe during the nineteenth century. Some changes occur nevertheless in the quiet village. The famous co-op store, Brugsforeningen, moves in, which results in the closing of the independent grocer, who in revenge turns his store into a boot-legging hang-out for the younger people. Kirk never ignores the fact that the opportunists become even more visible in the wake of progress.

A more important change is the farmers' economic instability. As the fishermen prosper, the landowners' superiority weakens. Inside the village, which comprises the

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[87] Ibid., p. 36

independent fishermen and the small landowners, an economic shift is definitely taking place due to the big changes in the entire economic situation in the country. As a result, many farmers were forced to leave the land and join the labour force. Kirk also gives an account of this shift within the labour force in his later collective novels Daglejerne and De ny tider. In Sweden, Ivar Lo-Johansson describes how a large estate fails in modernizing its farming methods because of unavailable capital in the old respectable family. The young idealistic owner of Åbl in Lo-Johansson's Traktorn finally experiences his inevitable downfall, whereas the crafty and thrifty Skjern-Svensen in Hans Scherfig's Idealister, another collective novel, gains great profits from his investing schemes. The farmers in Fiskerne on the other hand, sit in their cozy inherited farmhouses and are quite unaware of the economic changes around them. Their main concern is to maintain the status quo, but only too late do they understand that it can not be done without capital and new investments. Like Scherfig's Skjern-Svensen, who is incidentally also a member of the Inner Mission, the fishermen in Kirk's novel know that only thrift and expansion are possible solutions for anybody who wants to get ahead. Actually, the group of fishermen have more in common with the aspiring capitalist than with an organized communist cell. These people are only able to advance their economic situation because of a strong belief in the Protestant work ethic. The farmers have a lot to

learn, and quite a few of them find their way to Tabor, the Mission's temple.

The most important change taking place in the village is in the attitude of the younger generation. Jens Røn's two older children, Martin and Tabita, both have a strong desire for adventure and manage to break away from the religious group as well as from the village. Martin goes to sea and his sister gets employment in a bigger town. Tabita's character could be approached from two different angles, either from the traditional socio-psychological point of departure or from a purely sociological one. Tabita is definitely a rebellious and self-willed person, but she is also a sociological type of the kind that takes the path from the village to the industrial town, the inevitable route for many youths in any industrial society in transition. We chose the latter interpretation of Tabita as it makes a greater contribution to the meaning of the entire novel. In our view, Fiskerne does not only deal with a religious group that slowly wins the souls in a new settlement. It is true that the established church loses out to the fanatics of the Inner Mission, but the novel does not end at that point. The last thirteen pages are devoted to Tabita, who has finally broken all her bonds with the group. She gives birth to an illegitimate but healthy baby, and is looking forward to a marriage with her fiancé who at last has been promised steady employment in the bigger town. The Mission takes root in the new location, but as history has

proven many times already, a social group cannot remain motionless and permanent. Social changes are inevitable, and Tabita will in the future join a different group with a whole new set of rules. The novel concludes with its eye turned towards the horizon beyond which a new and totally different world awaits the youngest generation.

The three subplots come together at the end of the novel as the original group of fishermen finally assimilates with the rest of the villagers. Fiskerne, however, is not a story in the traditional sense. One of the differences between the mythos, the traditional story in ancient Greece, and the highly mimetic novel, such as the collective novel, lies in the author's attitude to the Stoff which in turn will influence his perception of the plot. In their historial research on the narrative mode, Scholes and Kellogg make the following observation:

> The epic story-teller is retelling a traditional story, and therefore his primary allegiance is not to fact, not to truth, not to entertaiment, but to the mythos itself--the story as preserved in the tradition which the epic story-teller is re-creating.[88]

The collective novelist is mostly interested in the workings of society, and pays his allegiance to history. The essential part of Fiskerne is not the story, but its clarification of an important and highly complex historical and sociological phenomenon. Some sociologists call these events social facts and add parenthetically facis sui

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[88]Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 12.

generis, which is a concept introduced by Émile Durkheim (1858 - 1917).[89] One of the French sociologist's major contributions to the new social science was his separation of social psychology from sociology in that he maintained the autonomy of social facts for scientific analysis. By social facts is meant various social institutions (like marriage, courts of law, markets, churches), or social norms and values (like marital morality, forms of politeness, religious concepts, political ideals, social prejudices), or observable, regular social phenomena (like the increase in the division of labour in civilized societies, the disappearance of the extended family in Europe).[90] The German sociologist, Imogen Seger, explains furthermore that:

> ...all such social facts cannot be explained by the attributes, and even less by the intentions, of individuals, shortlived and most variable as they are; they follow, rather, their own laws, sociological laws.[91]

By definition the novelist is an artist and not a scientist, and is therefore working with imagination rather than with sociological laws. However, it is possible that the plot of the collective novel is developed according to such laws or at least according to similar hypotheses based on the novelist's observations. The progression of the plot of Fiskerne, and as we shall see later in other collective novels, is in fact quite independent of the individual characters involved. Instead the groups or collectives have

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[89]Seger, p. 75.
[90]Ibid.
[91]Ibid.

their own rules and norms, and exist regardless of individual lives. This concept of "the whole being more than the sum of its parts" was also developed by Durkheim in the late nineteenth century and later used by Jules Romains under his own label "unanimism."

Returning to Fiskerne we will reconsider its place within the evolution of narrative. As we have learned from the plot outlines, which were derived from the three sociological groups present in the novel, the story, in Forster's terminology, is practically non-existent. Scholes and Kellogg would probably be tempted to label the plot as an "unplot" in much the same way as they see the naturalistic "slice of life" as the ultimate form of mimetic plot.[92] At the same time we also insist that story and plot are not necessarily identical. From the above discussion of sociological plots based on a group division of society, it is quite clear that Fiskerne indeed has a plot although a weak story. It is in view of these considerations that Fiskerne should be labelled a sociological novel. On the mythic-mimetic scale devised by Scholes and Kellogg,[93] the particular form of the collective plot would fit somewhere near the mimetic pole with one leg in the realm of sociology, but without becoming a case history, such as The Children of Sanchez(1961) by Oscar Lewis.[94] The latter book is first of all a scientific study and should accordingly be

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[92]Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 232.
[93]Ibid., p. 229.
[94]Ibid., p. 232.

classified as non-fiction; secondly, it is written in an autobiographical form, as the content is related by various members of the Sanchez family. Had it been fiction, Lewis' book would nevertheless have been of a different novelistic kind, as the autobiographical plots center around individuals.

The step from Kirk's Danish village to Dos Passos' New York City is gigantic in more than one way. The difference in size of the two communities is obvious. The life style of the people, as well as the physical environment of Manhattan, is far removed from a fishermen's harbor in a Nordic fjord. Furthermore, Manhattan Transfer is a much longer novel, inhabited by so many characters that the reader must resort to paper and pencil in order to keep track of the action. The style of writing is also very different from Kirk's straightforward narrative in the traditional manner of the nineteenth century realists. Dos Passos' innovative style has prompted several famous critics of belles lettres to praise his works as being among the best in modern times. In 1947 Jean-Paul Sartre declared Dos Passos the greatest writer of our time,[95] and in 1926 Sinclair Lewis went so far as to pronounce Manhattan Transfer more important than Joyce's Ulysses or the works of Proust.[96] Where Kirk tried to reach the masses, Dos Passos wrote for the literati, which is apparent from the very

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[95]Jean-Paul Sartre, "John Dos Passos and 1919," in Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention, p. 80.
[96]Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer, p. 4.

first page of Manhattan Transfer.

While we leave it to other critics to evaluate the artistic effort in Dos Passos' first collective novel, we feel compelled to comment upon the novel's structural pattern in terms of plot. Very little has been published about this book's collective aspects, although critics have invented several key phrases to describe its composition, such as "a sort of musical chairs,"[97] "roman de montage,"[98] and "a case of Brownian motion."[99] Three interesting studies are by Joseph Warren Beach in his American Fiction, 1920-40(1941), Blanche H. Gelfant in the excerpt from her The American City Novel(1954), and Charles C. Walcutt, in his American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream(1956). The general impression one gets from these texts is that Manhattan Transfer is "a representation of chaos" portrayed in such a manner that the purposelessness, impersonality, and dehumanization of the big city is felt throughout the novel. According to Gelfant, Dos Passos' technique is of the utmost importance, in that the "abstract" and "impressionistic" portrayal underlines the very meaning in the book, that is, to create a city in terms of space, atmosphere, way of life, and history.[100] It should be noted that we feel the terms "abstract" and "impressionistic" to be incompatible in the way in which Gelfant combines them.

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[97]Walcutt, p. 281.
[98]Jean-pierre Morel, "Roman de montage et poétique historique," Revue de littérature comparée, 51 (1977), 241.
[99]Ian Colley, Dos Passos and the Fiction of Despair (London: Macmillan Press, 1978), p.48.
[100]Gelfant, "John Dos Passos: The Synoptic Novel," p. 44.

An abstract portrait is not at all the same as an impressionistic one and cannot be used to describe the same picture. The overall technique in Manhattan Transfer, however, is impressionistic, as Dos Passos is more interested in atmosphere and effect than in photographic representation. His brushstroke technique of juxtaposing many small vignettes can thus be compared to the methods of impressionistic painting.

Dos Passos' untraditional technique is thus closely related to the pattern of the plot. Beach points out the importance of the thematic structure in Manhattan Transfer which takes the place of the conventional plot. Each chapter heading, he notices, indicates a theme, realistic or symbolic, that can be found in the city.[101] Thus each theme builds upon another until a total picture has been created. Gelfant adds a very important concept to Beach's interpretation. She points out that both Manhattan Transfer and USA "discern essential and underlying historical movements." In her opinion:

> ...[these books'] implicit intention is to press upon the public mind an awareness of a historical drift away from the American ideals of democracy, individuality, and liberty.... [Dos Passos] wanted to show the drift towards monopoly capitalism. [102]

The critic illustrates the first part of this statement with plenty of examples, but leaves out a discussion of the second part. In our view it is particularly this historical shift from one societal system to another which actually

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[101]Beach, The American Fiction, pp. 48-50.
[102]Gelfant, p. 41.

makes the plot or at least some progression in a story where the protagonist is the second Metropolis in the world. That Dos Passos had this historical perspective in mind while creating the novel is a plausible conclusion, since he already in the first drafts divided the novel into three major parts. According to the critic Lois Hughson, who studied these earlier versions, the three-part division is historical in nature:

> The first he calls the end of the great yachting and banking period; the second, making good up to the war crash; and the third, the anarchy of the 1920s.[103]

In other words, there is a plot in Manhattan Transfer, contrary to the opinion of Beach, which is both sociological and historical in origin. Our first task will thus be to outline the sociological plot that makes the structural backbone of the novel, and then tie it in with the historical aspects that make the plot progress.

Like Fiskerne, Manhattan Transfer begins with several people arriving in the community, and it ends with a departure. This is merely a convenient literary device used to introduce and leave the subject-matter in a neat way. The second chapter, "Metropolis," is really the section which describes the collective in question. Despite its first impression of chaos, Manhattan Transfer is a representation of a huge social conglomerate consisting of a myriad of social relationships, groups, and institutions. There are

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[103]Lois Hughson, "Narration in the Making of Manhattan Transfer," in Studies in the Novel, 8 (1976), 193.

also many lonely individuals in the city, who paradoxically are members of many different groups and institutions at the same time. Sociologists have long been aware of this tragic phenomenon in our enormous urban societies of today, as David Riesman testifies in The Lonely Crowd (1950). However, New York has been on the map for a long time and is not likely to disappear for a while yet despite its apparent chaos. The sociologist Imogen Seger makes the following observation:

> The city of New York may be the extreme example of men, ideas, institutions, groups of the most varied kinds rubbing against each other in a tiny space. Irreconcilable forces exist close together, and the results are reported in the daily news. Yet there is also the result that cultural inventions--new ideas and new practices and finally also new institutions--somehow reconcile the irreconcilable. After all, the city still lives, and that is almost a miracle. [104]

Dos Passos probably did not believe in miracles. The one unifying factor he added in Manhattan Transfer was "Dollars," which is one of the most important reasons for New York's existence. Every village, town, city, or metropolis has an economic basis, and it is this basis with its philosophical implications that changes character in the novel. The social nexus changes accordingly and influences the lives of the inhabitants.

The social nexus in "Metropolis" is far more complicated than in Fiskerne. On a sociological level all the seemingly unrelated characters are in fact interrelated. The rich businessman, the accountant, the realtor, the

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[104]Seger, p. 146.

prospective houseowner, the fire fighter, the entertainer, the dishwasher, the waiter, the milkman, the train engineer--they are all members of the same collective. As in real life, most of the people in "Metropolis" are unaware of each other, although surrounded by literally millions of faces. Dos Passos is here only confirming the sociological prediction that:

> Our society will become not more simple but, on the contrary, more complex, direct personal relationships will decline compared to the indirect, impersonal ones, every individual will become interdependent with more and more other people without ever seeing their faces, often, without ever knowing about their existence. [105]

The latter statement was made in 1970. Dos Passos published his novel in 1925, but saw already then the disadvantages of large communities. Characters come and go throughout the novel, and the city continues to survive with its cobweb of institutions and relationships quite irrespective of individual lives. The author makes no attempt to define any groups, their goals, or their norms and rules, which makes it difficult for the reader to sort out any plot. Rather than trying to solve the tricky game of relating all the individuals to sociological groups and institutions, we intend to leave that aspect of the novel alone, since it would only lead to a painstaking compilation not suitable for this study. What is important is for the reader to understand the overall vastness of the collective and the many levels on which it is operating.

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[105]Ibid., p. 122.

Besides the underlying sociological structure in Manhattan Transfer, which is mostly presented unexplained, there is also the historical-philosophical theme that ties the scenes together. Nearly everyone in "Metrolopolis" is obsessed with the old American Dream, which has haunted the continent since Benjamin Franklin. The philosophy inherent in Poor Richard's Almanac is still with some of the characters in Dos Passos' novel. The echo of Horatio Alger's voice reverberates in the minds of Ed Thatcher and the French immigrant youth Émile. The former is convinced that his hard work and savings will bring his daughter Ellen a happy future, while Émile expresses the general idea of America as the land of milk and honey:

> I want to get somewhere in the world, that's what I mean. Europe's rotten and stinking. In America a fellow can get ahead. Birth dont [sic] matter, education dont matter. It's all getting ahead.[106]

The American ideals of democracy and free enterprise have become a myth, a fact which these characters realize only too late. It is in "Metropolis" now a matter of big money on the level of large corporations rather than of individual hard-working people. The high-pressure real estate agent has a foreboding of this big change:

> We are caught up Mr. Perry on a great wave whether we will or no, a great wave of expansion and progress. A great deal is going to happen in the next few years. All these mechanical inventions--telephones, electricity, steel bridges, horseless vehicles--they are all leading somewhere. It's up to us to be on the inside, in the forefront

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[106]John Dos Passos, Manhattan Transfer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), p. 21.

of progress.[107]

As we get nearer the end of the novel, we hear more about the world of big business, banking, and corrupt politics. Although the narrator never lets the reader in on particular dealings and how they are all related, he does leave the impression in the mind of the reader that money is what makes the world in Manhattan go around. The original American Dream of material success, fame, and fortune by means of virtue and hard work, remains only a dream in Dos Passos' city. Some characters do reach the stars, but their means of getting there are everything but virtuous. The celebrities of show business are beautifully caricatured in the song "O we went to the animals' fair" (p. 33), and the bankers, who work out the world's economy at night in the mysterious tall skyscrapers of steel and glass, are described in a prose poem:

> At midnight the fourfunneled express steamers slide into the dark out of their glary berths. Bankers blearyeyed from secret conferences hear the hooting of the tugs as they are let out of side doors by lightningbug watchmen; they settle grunting into the back seats of limousines, and are whisked uptown into the Forties, clinking streets of ginwhite whiskey-yellow ciderfizzling lights.[108]

It is always risky to rely on drafts and earlier versions of a literary work in order to interpret the published work. In the case of Manhattan Transfer, however, it appears fairly safe to repeat Dos Passos' statement from his notes, that the third part is to be devoted to the anarchy of the

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[107]Ibid., p. 15.
[108]Ibid., p. 305.

1920's.[109] In this part we find no solidarity left among the characters, but only an anarchistic state where everybody fights everybody. Wealth and fame are gained by a few, but as in The Great Gatsby, the means are of a rather dubious character.

The plot of Fiskerne comes together at the end of the novel, as the various collectives merge. This is not the case in Manhattan Transfer, which ends unresolved. Every relationship, either social or emotional, exists on very shaky ground and is on the verge of collapse. Only one character, Jimmy Herf, escapes the doomed city with some integrity intact. The rest of the major characters, Ellen, Baldwin, Congo Jake, Gus MacNeil, make compromises and sacrifice parts of their human integrity to the collective, Manhattan, which is governed by a set of rules that do not allow for compassion, solidarity, or human dignity.

The plot of Manhattan Transfer does not progress in terms of a few well defined collectives, their conflicts, and their accomplishments. Fiskerne is much closer to the Aristotelian plot in this respect. In Dos Passos' novel the entire collective--the city--changes character, but through a myriad of social encounters that continuously change. These relationships, furthermore, are loaded with unresolved conflicts without ever reaching climax and a subsequent dénouement. The many voices from individuals, groups, and even places and buildings slowly build up a crescendo of

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[109]Hughson, p. 192.

madness, which is abruptly turned off as we are led away from the city by Jimmy Herf.

Manhattan Transfer is an extreme example of a collective novel depicting a community in the process of disintegration. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a few Scandinavian novels fit the same category: Hamsun's Segelfoss by (1915), H. C. Branner's Legetøj (1936), Martin A. Hansen's Nu opgiver han (1935), and Lo-Johansson's Traktorn (1943). The experimental novel by Kjellgren, Människor kring en bro (1935) essentially portrays a social group with strong feelings of belonging, but at the same time it illustrates how a superstructure (here the management of the building firm and the city as a whole) can bring about unwanted disintegration.

The third class of collective plots that we will deal with is founded on entirely different sociological concepts. Rather than portraying various changing communities from a historical point of view, this group of novels explores the psychic lives of collective beings. Jules Romains, like other unanimists (Émile Verhaeren, Georges Chennevière), believed that social collectives have a consciousness of their own, which he explored already during his apprentice years in La Vie Unanime (1908):

> L'Âme a péri dans l'homme et renaît dans le groupe
> Plus robuste qu'avant;

Elle serre comme une croûte entre ses dents
Une seule idée.[110]

Sociologically speaking, Romains was interested in the transformation of crowds or collectivities when these change into primary groups governed by one spirit. In Mort de quelqu'un the author centers the action around an event which gives rise to a series of group activities spreading out in the community like rings in the water, becoming weaker and weaker till they finally disappear. Thirty-five years after the book was written, Romains describes in an introduction to a new edition how he perceives the sociological importance of an event:

> I was led, in writing The Death of a Nobody, to explore the notion of an event; to perceive that in collective life an event is in itself a kind of natural system which spontaneously organizes a certain number of facts, of emotions, of material acts, which has its own dynamism, which evolves between a beginning and an end. The event is a piece of the social life, in a different sense but just as truly as the individual or the group of individuals. Sometimes the event emerges, over a part of its breadth or its course, with the individual. Or else it constitutes a kind of unfolding or prolongation of the individual. [111]

In Fiskerne the protagonist is a group of fishermen, in Manhattan Transfer it is a large city, and in Mort de quelqu'un it is an event, the death of a man. As in the previously discussed collective novels, the story in Romains' novel is thin and not very intriguing: an average elderly man dies from a cold, his very old parents in the

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[110]Jules Romains, "Le Groupe contre la ville," in La Vie Unanime: Poèmes 1904-1907 (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1926), p. 123.
[111]Romains, The Death of a Nobody, p. viii.

countryside are informed about the death, and a traditional funeral takes place. The plot, however, is cleverly thought out following the unanimist doctrine, which is both a collective theory and a social ideal. As we know, similar theories had already been expounded by social scientists such as Émile Durkheim and Gustave Le Bon,[112] that social groups are "more" than the sum of the single individuals. Durkheim called it "collective consciousness," which could be treated scientifically as a social fact.[113] The idealism implied in the doctrine is of a romantic nature and was formulated by Romains and his friend Chennevière for the first time in a literary journal, Le Penseur, in 1905. The group, they argued, has a single soul, the unanime, and once created it becomes a dieu,[114] that is, "a group which is fully conscious of its reality as a total being, which has a 'conscience vraiment unanime'."[115]

In Mort de quelqu'un several groups are born, grow in size and strength, and at one point assimilate and presumably reach the proportions of a dieu during the funeral. The action is thus precipitated by the death of Jacques Godard, but the plot develops according to the growing collectives and their changing behaviour. While still well and alive, M. Godard is a nobody, a lonely individual who does not feel a part of the city. The

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[112]Gustave Le Bon, The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938).
[113]Seger, p. 70.
[114]Boak, p. 24.
[115]Norrish, p. 12.

philosophies of his countrymen Descartes and Sartre ("Je pense, donc je suis," and "Être-en-soi/être pour soi") strike a familiarly sounding note, although in a different context, when Romains' character exclaims: "Je ne sors jamais. Je ne m'amuse pas; je n'existe pas."[116] Godard does not in fact become an active part of the city's pulsating life until his existence or decease reaches the consciousness of others for more than just a fleeting moment.

The first group to share this knowledge of his earthly departure consists of the tenants in the apartment building where Godard resided. From being an aggregate of people within physical proximity, the families become a primary group defined by durability, solidarity, shared emotional tone, and a feeling of being "in" as opposed to "out." In Romains' words they are an unanime. The porter is the first to possess the secret which makes him feel different from the rest of the world. Soon the word spreads and a small group enters the apartment of the deceased:

> La maison était toute changée. La veille encore elle n'existait guère. Les familles s'isolaient et blâmaient le propriétaire d'avoir dressé des cloisons trop minces....Maintenant la maison fermentait. Du corps de Godard s'était échapée, avec le dernier soupir, une force dont la maison avait besoin.[117]

The same type of group behaviour has been explored by the Norwegian writer Sigurd Hoel in his collective novel En dag

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[116]Jules Romains, Mort de quelqu'un (Paris: Librairie Gallimard. Éditions de la nouvelle revue française, 1936), p. 12.
[117]Ibid., pp. 36-37.

I oktober (1931). The conduct of an unfortunate woman, who eventually commits suicide, gives rise to much gossip, and consequently emotional bonds are quickly established among the lodgers in the house:

> Gruppen var blitt enda større. Mange snakket. Alle var ivrige, i en egen høy stemning, det var som de kjente hverandre alle sammen. Alle følte at de var med på noe.[118]

In *Mort de quelqu'un* the group solidarity is most intense when the in-group is confronted with an outsider. In the second chapter a small gathering of women is chatting on one of the landings when the medical officer passes them. For the first time, while living in the apartmenthouse, they share a feeling of togetherness, whereas the doctor represents the out-group. Romains expresses this feeling in philosophical terms which form the basis of his social idealism:

> Alors le groupe des femmes exista, avec cette âme confuse et bondissante qu'ont les foules des églises. Comme elles il conçut fugitivement des choses qui dépassent la destinée terrestre et la puissance humaine; comme elles il peina, une minute, pour incarner certains rêves de l'homme: l'être qui se sent tout, et la vie qui ne finit pas.[119]

Already at this point we see a striking difference between the group consciousness exhibited here and that in *Fiskerne* or *Manhattan Transfer*. In the latter work, the people making up collectives do not share the emotional feelings that reach religious proportions in Romains' novel. Manhattan is like a huge monster, its guts full of

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[118]Sigurd Hoel, *En dag i oktober. Samlede romaner og fortellinger*, III (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1950), 9.
[119]Romains, *Mort de quelqu'un*, p. 41.

gloomy-looking mechanical devices, in which its masses of inhabitants are treated like living particles in a constantly moving engine:

> Glowworm trains shuttle in the gloaming through the foggy looms of spiderweb bridges, elevators soar and drop in their shafts, harbor lights wink. Like sap at the first frost at five o'clock men and women begin to drain gradually out of the tall buildings downtown, grayfaced throngs flood subways and tubes, vanish underground.[120]

For Romains unanimism is a positive feeling capable of uniting people for the benefit of mankind. His contemporary, Dos Passos, does not seem to share the same optimism, in that he reduces the masses in his novel to either insensitive robot-like creatures or to lower life organisms. Hans Kirk on the other hand explores some of the more dramatic effects that a group can exert upon its members. In Fiskerne the fanatic Pastor Thomsen speaks to the congregation about Hell and damnation:

> Han drev dem sammen i en fællesfølelse, som skræmte får i uvejr. Kvinderne jamrede stille eller græd. Mændene sad med stive øjne og rokkede uroligt frem og tilbage. Han havde dem i sin magt. Han manede som en troldmand over dem, til de ikke længere havde nogen vilje eller forstand og helt havde glemt, hvem de var.[121]

In the last three quoted passages, the tight group feeling and the loss of identity on the part of the members are common denominators. For a moment, each group breathes like one body, in which the individual consciousness no longer has any importance. In Mort de quelqu'un the soul of the collective reaches the sky, in Manhattan Transfer the gray

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[120]Dos Passos, Manhattan Transfer, p. 305.
[121]Kirk, Fiskerne, p. 56.

masses drain into the underground like sewage, while the religious group in Fiskerne remains on earth like sheep stripped of free will and human reasoning.

In the third chapter of Mort de quelqu'un, the scene changes to the small village of Godard's birthplace where the old parents still reside. The news of the event circulates and the original unanime in Paris expands to include the village dwellers. Physical proximity is no longer a necessary condition for the collective's existence. The shared knowledge of an unusual event is what ties these people together who are otherwise separated by hundreds of kilometers. Soon another unanime is born in the diligence in which the old man is riding on his way to Paris. The passengers are at first united by the slow pace of time, that "sticks to them like glue," and then by a sense of intimate family ties. However, the group does not become a true unanime until the news of the dead son has been released. On the other hand, as soon as the people in either group have ceased to think or talk about their new secret, the spell is broken and the unanime disintegrates:

> Puis les familles se dispersèrent, à la fin du repas. Le hameau ne fut bientôt que peu de chose. Et Jacques n'y était pas plus que dans son cadavre de Paris.[122]

Throughout the interjacent chapters (iv and v), the author makes use of the technique of simultanéité in order to combine the two collectives that are involved with Godard's death. This technique is not unique to Mort de

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[122]Romains, Mort de quelqu'un, p. 60.

quelqu'un, but can be found in nearly all collective novels that seek to capture simultaneous happenings in different localities. In Romains' novel, as in Hoel's En dag i oktober, the method is especially effective as it helps to create a state of suspense while the various parties are approaching each other. The tension is finally released in chapter v when the characters gather to accompany Godard to his final resting place. The desire to unite spiritually is very strong among the group members, and what is most important, a conscious effort has to be made in order to bridge the vacuum between them:

> Cependant, au fond d'eux-mêmes, vers ces régions de l'être qui ne pensent pas, il y avait chez les uns et les autres une sorte d'enflure, d'effervescence, une envie de déborder et se joindre par-dessus les séparations négligeables des corps, une promiscuité croissante, une fête où de petites âmes aveugles et ivres se coudoyaient en fredonnant, comme les gens d'une noce.[123]

Romains calls this technique of bringing the action together un ensemble. It is a particularly useful device in collective novels that plotwise approach the three-part Aristotelian structure, like Fiskerne, Noatun, and Människor kring en bro. The moments of climax that occur in the subplots are typically those scenes where group members assemble to confront some common problem, or somehow to justify the reasons for the group's existence. In Manhattan Transfer and other collective novels that are concerned with the disintegration of collectives, the technique of ensembles is less likely to be used.

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[123]Ibid., p. 154.

The dénouement in Mort de quelqu'un begins after the funeral scene in the church, as the group scatters and the families return to their lodgings. Simultaneous events are recorded again, but in contrast to the first part of the novel, Godard's presence is felt less and less among the members. The outline of the collective becomes weaker, the unanimes disintegrate, and finally the memory of the event only survives in a single individual.

Of the three plots discussed here, the one in Mort de quelqu'un is the simplest to summarize, as the novel concentrates on one collective being born out of a single event. The author did not seek to incorporate the sociological incident in a historical frame, as was the case in Fiskerne and Manhattan Transfer, thus having greater liberty to develop a smooth and continuous plot line. It illustrates better than any collective novel the possibility of having a plot without a protagonist in the usual sense. One scholar has called it an anti-novel,[124] a novel without an active hero, but in fact we do have an active "hero," a collective around which the entire plot revolves.

B. Character:

After having concluded our discussion on the plots in Fiskerne, Manhattan transfer, and Mort de quelqu'un, we wish to investigate the type of characters inhabiting the

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[124]Boak, p. 51.

sociological groups, and what role they play in regard to the action. We have already decided that most of the characters are rather flat, but have not as yet determined the appropiateness of such characterization.

According to E. M. Forster, "a Jane Austen novel is more complicated than a Defoe, because the characters are inter-dependent, and there is the additional complication of a plot."[125] He continues his comparison by using a metaphor in which he perceives Moll Flanders as an isolated tree in an open space, whereas Jane Austen's characters are like a group of bushes in a shrubbery:

> ...and any one who tried to thin out a shrubbery knows how wretched the bushes look if they are transplanted elsewhere, and how wretched is the look of the bushes that remain.[126]

In Fiskerne, or in any other collective novel, no character can be compared with Moll Flanders. On the contrary, we are presented with several groups of "bushes" that together make an organized whole. Yet there is a marked difference between Austen's characters and those in collective novels. Jens Røn, Laust Sand, Thomas Jensen, and Povl Vrist, just to name a few, are fully fleshed personalities who collectively make the story. At the same time any one of them is dispensable. Had the author removed some of them, the "shrubbery" might look less full, but it would still grow and look like a "shrubbery." The interdependency between the characters in the sociological plot is not as strong as it is in Austen's

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[125]Forster, p. 101.
[126]Ibid.

Emma, where in Forster's words "the result is a closely woven fabric from which nothing can be removed." In other words, the plot progression in Fiskerne is determined by the groups of people and not so much by the people themselves as individuals. It is even conceivable to have the characters act their parts anonymously without much characterization and still have sufficient materiaL for the plot. As we shall se later, this is the case with the people in Mort de quelqu'un, who all have a very precise social role to play although only one of them is named (Godard). have names, and yet a very precise social role to play.

Kirk's particular technique in this respect is to introduce the characters as complete and identifiable personalities, who hardly change or develop throughout the novel. Within the first ten pages all the fishermen with their families are described in terms of names, ages, physical appearances, and some personality traits. Laust Sand, for example, is forty-seven years old, is tall and lanky, and most importantly "med et sært og kuet ansigt i det mørke pjuskede skæg. Øjnene havde let ved at løbe i vand. Laust Sand var enkemand og ventede sin steddatter Adolfine, som skulle passe hans hus."[127] His experience as a group member is mentioned in passing: "Jens Røn og Laust Sand stod ved siden af hinanden. De havde været i båd sammen ved havfiskeriet, sålænge de snart kunne huske."[128] Laust's strange and cowed face follows him like a leitmotif in the

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[127]Kirk, Fiskerne, p. 6.
[128]Ibid.

novel until his terrible secret finally is revealed prior to his tragic death. His fate is only one example of what the environment can do to an individual. As a member of a group he is under heavy group pressure. In order to survive economically, he is bound to the fishermen, but he is not able to obey the unwritten "laws" of the group and cannot cope with the resultant conflicts. As to the connection with the other characters, Laust Sand does not influence or change them, with the obvious exception of his stepdaughter. The story of this man contributes much to the story of the collective as a whole, in that it illustrates some of the fundamental weaknesses in the group. But as a character isolated from the group, Laust does not present a very interesting topic for discussion.

Each character in Fiskerne can be analyzed in much the same manner. They all have their little idiosyncratic ways, which make them human and alive. At the same time these personality traits serve as different facets of the sociological group. In the collective novel, the author seems to explore only those aspects of human behaviour which contribute to the topic of his work, namely a collective of some sort. Kirk has in Fiskerne covered a wide variety of social and psychological problems resulting from the particular group structure under study. The main function of his characters is to enact these sociological laws of conflict, external and internal.

As already mentioned, the various groups in Fiskerne

have several external conflicts, for example the religious Mission versus the established church or Vesterhavsfiskerne versus fjordfiskerne, which make the subplots progress. At the same time, the individual group members have their private conflicts in regard to the group norms. Those conflicts are internal to the group, but lead nevertheless to some changes that are social in content. The role of the characters is thus twofold. Firstly, they people the collectives with individuals, and secondly, they represent the various aspects of the sociological groups, so that the reader might observe the structure and function of these, as well as the resultant conflicts.

Without degrading Kirk's characters, we finally want to claim them as types in so far as they fulfill roles outside themselves. Scholes and Kellogg consider a character as a type whenever he or she is seen less as an individual character, than as a part of a larger framework, which may be moral, theological or referable to some extraliterary scheme.[129] From our previous discussion it seems evident that the people in Fiskerne do refer to a sociological plan and thus can be classified as types. On the whole this is true of the majority of characters in collective novels.

In Manhattan Transfer a number of characters are somewhat developed while the majority are only seen in one pose. The three most developed characters are Baldwin, the laywer and politician, Ellen Thatcher, and Jimmy Herf, the

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[129]Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, p. 204.

journalist. We follow Ellen right from birth, when she is still in her basket, till she enters her third marriage as a mature woman. Jimmy is also brought into the novel as a young child, and by the time he leaves New York he is a man going through the mid-life crisis. Only Baldwin is already a practicing lawyer when we see him first, but time does not leave him unmarked either. Time and circumstances obviously change the characters, and we definitely do not have the same monolithic personalities throughout the novel. Yet, one is reluctant to classify Manhattan Transfer as a novel of development, as the plot does not revolve around the characters, but rather around the changing society in the big city. When R. S. Crane writes about the concept of plot as a synthesis of the elements of action, character, and thought, this concept may be applied to Dos Passos' novel. In a very recent study of the latter novelist by Iain Colley, the critic points out the relationship between the characters and the city life portrayed in Manhattan Transfer. In his opinion, Jimmy Herf is not so much a person as a character in whom the movements of the city are reflected:

> By showing at length the degeneration of a gifted and perceptive young man, the author spotlights with a dual focus the heartlessly random universality of Brownian Motion.[130]

Ellen Thatcher is likewise seen as an integral part of both the action and the meaning of the novel, rather than as a person in her own right. Her "infinite egoism" echoes the

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[130]Colley, p. 53.

character of the city itself, "the falseness of Ellen, the sophistication she adopts for self-defence, is the falseness of city civilisation itself."[131] As in Fiskerne, the individual characters seem to be subservient to the collective character of the community. We see Ellen in many different situations, now a little girl dancing in her parents' living room, now as Elaine Thatcher Oglethorpe married to an eccentric actor on her way to Atlantic City, feeling cold and sick. The details are vivid, and yet they make no connection to the past or to the future. How she reached this point in her life is never clarified, and her feelings, dreams, and material existence are only exposed to us in flashes without any continuity as far as her character development is concerned. The details, however, do relate to the various thematic sketches that make up the total impression of the city. The many shapes, thoughts, and bits of behaviour are what make Dos Passos' Manhattan.

In Mort de quelqu'un the role of each individual character is almost absorbed in the larger collective. Nobody is named besides Godard and nobody is characterized any further than their relationship to the collective requires. Porter, tenant, medical officer, housewife, butcher, postoffice clerk, and undertaker are recurring titles that in most cases must make up for characterization as well. More than any other collective novel, this novel relies on the group as being the protagonist. The characters

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[131] Ibid., p. 57.

in Mort de quelqu'un are in fact playing sociological roles in reference to a specific event.

Going back to Scholes and Kellogg's mythic-mimetic scale, the case of Romains' novel is on the very borderline of a sociological study as far as the plot-character relationship is concerned. Rather than recording actual events, however, as in the case study, the author has managed to dramatize a sociological hypothesis, where individual identities are irrelevant. Again, change and development within the characters are of a special kind. The people's consciousness grows concurrently with the strengthening of the group until the final stage of the unanime has been reached. As in Fiskerne and Manhattan Transfer, character cannot be separated from action and thought, but is intimately tied in with the particular type of synthesis which makes up the plot of the collective novel.

C. Summary:

In concluding this chapter we will make a short résumé of our findings in regard to plot and character in the collective novel. First, it appears that this kind of novel is far from being plotless. In fact, the three different novels that we have investigated have highly structured plots that would be extremely difficult to diagram in a binary system of interacting forces. The plots seem to

operate on at least three levels, most importantly as a sociological system, secondly in terms of historical changes,[132] and finally on a psychological level. In other words, the action evolves from the study of social groups, their genesis and developments in certain historical epochs, as well as their psychological effect upon the individual members. In some instances, a fourth dimension is added to the plot, concerning the fundamental existence of modern man, thus touching upon the universal problem of the human condition. This aspect will be discussed further in the last chapter dealing with ideologies. On the whole, however, the collective novel remains as a literary document of specific sociological and historical phenomena with only the kind of universality present which is inherent in empirical research.

Like R. S. Crane, we adhere to the theory that character is inseparable from plot in the literary whole. Based on our previous studies, we believe that the plot follows its own rules of progression according to the particular collective in question, similar to the way social groups are governed by a set of rules independent from their members. However, the characters are indispensable as a whole, since they act out the problems under consideration. The powers exerted by the collective can actually be observed in the individual characters, thus giving us a

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[132]History does not play an active role in Mort de quelqu'un as it does in Les Hommes de bonne volonté. However, as sociology is rooted in history, sociological events (e.g. funeral rituals) have a historical component.

concrete picture of group norms, behaviour, goals, pressure, expansion, and possible disintegration.

In our final comment on plot and character we will return to the initial question of reader-involvement and identification. Without going into the details of the philosophical aspects of the epic theatre, we want to point out some similarities between the collective novel and this Marxist-oriented theatre created in the twenties.

Brecht observed that modern man is no longer in charge of his own personal destiny, but must be thought of as "the sum total of all social relationships."[133] The traditional representation of man on stage as a hero, whose conscience and character are determining his fate, is therefore outdated, according to this Marxist playwright. The characters in the collective novel function in much the same way as their counterparts do in the epic theater, in that their actions arouse and strengthen the reader's critical faculty rather than his emotions. As mentioned before, the writers of collective novels were not teachers of Marxist esthetics as a group. It is reasonable to believe, though, that most of them had been influenced indirectly by the new waves of objective literature with their untraditional techniques that swept through Europe during the first three decades of this century. It is also quite possible that the same writers had taken the Marxist theory to their hearts,

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[133]As quoted by Henri Arvon, Marxist Esthetics, tr. from French by Helen R. Lane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 77.

that a certain distance must be kept between the literary work and the audience so that the involvement does not inhibit the learning experience. Henri Arvon paraphrases Brecht's ideas on this subject:

> In classic theater the spectator is caught up in an action that is entirely self-consistent, thanks to the author's careful plotting; in epic theater the spectator witnesses a series of tableaux that are not linked together by any sort of artificial device, thus enabling him to "keep his distance" from the spectacle set before him; he is thus a witness, in a manner of speaking, to a sociological experiment accompanied by a commentary.[134]

While keeping this attitude towards literature in mind, we are under the impression that the collective novel is probably not meant to entertain nor to engage the reader in a process of Aristotelian catharsis. More likely, the author's intention is to inform the reader about the workings of society in a critical manner, thus placing his work somewhere between the critical realism of the nineteenth century and the Marxist interpretations of reality as professed by Bertolt Brecht.

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[134]Ibid., p. 79.

IV. NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

> The aim of art must therefore lie in something still other than the purely mechanical imitation of what is there, which in every case can bring to birth only technical tricks, not works, of art.[135]

The collective novel is in mode and form far removed from the early myths and romances in the history of narrative art. According to Northrop Frye's classification of fiction into five degrees of protagonist-identification, we must regard the collective genre as of the low mimetic mode and even of the ironic mode, the lowest of the five, as for example Idealister by Hans Scherfig. As in Vanity Fair, the protagonist in the collective novel, that is, a group, is neither a god nor a superhero, but merely of the ordinary people. Frye defines the low mimetic mode in this way:

> If superior neither to other men nor to his environment, the hero is one of us: we respond to a sense of his common humanity, and demand from the poet the same canons of probability that we find in our own experience.[136]

Compared with its nineteenth-century realistic predecessors, the collective novel has a special problem concerning the teller-audience relationship. In the latter novel, the reader is faced with fragmentary stories based on sociological plots that are given life by groups of two

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[135]G. W. F. Hegel, Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, tr. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 45.
[136]Northrop Frye, "Fictional Modes and Forms," in Approaches to the Novel: Materials for a Poetics, ed. Robert Scholes (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1966), p. 24.

dimensional characters, a combination that does not promise the reader much in terms of excitement. More so than in the naturalistic novel of the Zolaesque kind, the teller of a collective story must be aware of the dangers involved in imitating the ordinary. Without a good story, it is an extremely difficult task to relate the mechanics of social phenomena without becoming tedious. An otherwise talented novelist, Martin A. Hansen showed little ingenuity in this respect in his collective novels Nu opgiver han and Kolonien. In fact, many of the Scandinavian attempts in the collective genre failed in fulfilling the artistic criteria from a reader's point of view. Some examples are Lag by H. Herdal, Kontormennesker by L. Fischer, and Koch's Arbejere.

The form of the collective novel is as suitable for socialist endeavors as the elegy is for meditation upon death, and as a result several young authors employed the former genre as a vehicle for their political ends. This was especially true of the so-called proletarian writers in Sweden who did not achieve much recognition beyond the initial publication of their works. Even Ivar Lo-Johansson, the enthusiastic spokesman for the new form, found it very difficult to create an artistically pleasing novel of the collective genre, and only partially achieved this with Traktorn.

As the artistic execution of the Stoff in this genre is of utmost importance, we will proceed to investigate the composition of the narrative itself, the text, in some of

the most successful novels. Besides works already discussed in the previous chapters, Människor kring en bro, As I Lay Dying, and Winesburg, Ohio will be included in the study as examples of unusual narrative techniques.

Following the Flaubertian principle that the author should be everywhere, but nowhere apparent, the collective novelists managed to eliminate the narrator as a character or histor. In the ancient epics the histor played an important role as a commentator, discussing the events and passing moral judgments while seeking the truth,[137] but in the collective novels the action is highly dramatic and the characters tend to tell their own stories. The narrator is omniscient, not as one almighty god, but rather as a witness who occasionally is capable of revealing unspoken thoughts. Sometimes these are inner monologues, logically arranged and well articulated as in Mort de quelqu'un. At other times the narrator displays unexpressed thoughts and feelings of the whole collective, which is certainly effective in novels concerning primary groups, such as Fiskerna, Noatun, and Romains' novel. In addition, Dos Passos experiments with stream-of-consciousness techniques that seek to unveil the level of pre-speech awareness. Two other American works, namely Winesburg, Ohio by Sherwood Anderson and As I Lay Dying by Faulkner, could be considered as variants of the collective genre, as they explore the subconscious and the secret lives of groups of people in certain sociological

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[137]Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative, pp. 265-66.

situations.

Most important is the narrator's closeness to his characters and to the scenery. Seldom do we find the contemplating story-teller sitting comfortably in the background surveying the action. In the collective novel the focus of the camera eye changes constantly, thus making the observer feel out of breath. Character portraits, descriptions of scenery and work places, dialogues, and accounts of unspoken thoughts are all intertwined. This method becomes clearer through a comparison with a novel that in many repects fits the collective category, and yet does not belong to the genre. Main Street by Sinclair Lewis is about Gopher Prairie, but like Pelle Erobreren, the structure of the plot is built on the life story of a person rather than of a community. Furthermore, in Main Street the narrator is telling the story from a distance rather than being amid the action from the very beginning. He has time to explain the circumstances and to comment upon the situation in a philosophical manner similar to that of his colleague, the histor:

> A girl on a hilltop; credulous, plastic, young; drinking the air as she longed to drink life. The eternal aching comedy of expectant youth.[138]

In Fiskerne, Tabita is also the symbol of youth, but here the narrator is right on the scene viewing the horizon with her:

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[138]Sinclair Lewis, Main Street (New York: The New American Library, 1961) p. 7.

> Nu øjnede Tabita et sejl i fjorden. Hun lagde drengen ned i vognen og vinkede til båden med sit lommetørklæde. En sky gik for solen, og skyggen drev hen over vandet som en stor, mørkeblå flage.[139]

Any symbolism is implied in the action itself, both in the character and in nature, and the narrator has nothing to add.

The teller in Manhattan Transfer creeps right up to the character and imperceptibly changes places with him or her:

> "Good night Ellen." The streak of light of the door narrowed behind mummy, slowly narrowed to a thread up and along the top. The knob clicked; the steps went away down the hall; the front door slammed.[140]

Only in this book's prose poems does the author introduce an omniscient narrator who is capable of observing the whole city from an objective viewpoint, sometimes from within the city, sometimes from high above, looking down upon the anthill community. Occasionally the histor will let his voice be known in these passages, as in the introductory poem to "Metropolis" where he compares the modern city to powerful, but long since perished centres of antiquity. The contrast between the two types of narration in Manhattan Transfer only enhances the idea of the city as an autonomous body and yet consisting of a myriad of individual souls.

The most distinguishing characteristic of the style in the collective novel is perhaps the shifting point of view. The lack of consistency in the story-telling itself often makes a confusing impression upon the reader. One never knows what to expect from what character and from which

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[139]Kirk, Fiskerne, p. 251.
[140]Dos Passos, Manhattan Transfer, p. 44.

angle, and this at times makes it difficult to grasp the totality of the situation. Some of the collective writers, such as Dos Passos, Hans Kirk, and Romains, solve this problem in their own unique and subtle way, whereas others go about it in a rather obvious manner. In the Norwegian novel En dag i oktober, for example, the narrative is divided into four parts: the afternoon, the evening, and the night of October 10, 1930, plus the morning of the next day. Each section is then subdivided into chapters, each of which deals with one person or family, captured in simultaneous happenings at a specified time. The technique of simultaneity is evident throughout the novel, and only in the one scene after the suicide do all the characters gather together.

Another case is the Swedish Människor kring en bro by Josef Kjellgren, in which the chapters are separated by documentary work descriptions, arbetsjournaler. These passages of documentation convey an air of authenticity and also remind the reader of the bridge building project, that is the center of the story. As far as content goes, however, the journals are of little interest to the readers, naturally excepting civil engineers. A third example is a Danish novel Lagetsi by H. C. Branner in which the narrator also goes visiting one day after work hours, five o'clock to be exact, to relate how each office worker lives, acts, and thinks. Coincidently, several of the workers decide to go to watch the same movie, although at different locations. The

effect of this "trick" seems to be rather awkward.

The composition of the collective novel has been labelled impressionistic due to the shifting viewpoints, interrupted plot lines, and "scenic" presentations.[141] Since it is easy to confuse the philosophy of a movement with its methods, we find it necessary to investigate the original meaning of this "ism." Initially the movement was a reaction against the status quo in nineteenth-century French painting. The first impressonists (Monet, Pissaro) wished to express their art in more personal fashions, using techniques hitherto unknown in art circles. In fact the school was a whole new way of perceiving the visual arts, and not merely a technique, but an ideology.

In impressionistic paintings, poems, and music (Debussy), the artist seeks to capture the sensations and feelings of the fleeting moment and shies away from anything intellectual, and as a result the work appears blurred, non-formal, sensual, and free from symbolic meaning.[142] Instead of depicting their own subjective feelings in regard to the objects, the impressionists wanted to portray things as they actually appear in nature at a given moment. The resultant art work, however, often looked subjective despite the artist's intention. Paul Verlaine expresses his thoughts on this art form in his "Art poétique":

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[141]Gelfant, p. 134; and Petersen, "Den kollektive roman," p. 11.

[142]"Impressionism," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 1974 enlarged ed.

> Car nous voulons la Nuance encor,
> Pas la Couleur, rien que la Nuance!
> Oh! La Nuance seule fiance
> Le rêve au rêve et la flûte au cor![143]

In narrative prose the concept is more precarious. The German Hermann Bahr calls it subjective naturalism,[144] and C. C. Walcutt, who sees Winesburg, Ohio as both an impressionistic and naturalistic novel, defines the concept in the following way:

> ...impressionism attempts to render the quality of experience more closely, more colorfully, more delicately than it has been rendered. To this end it presents the mind of a character receiving impressions rather than judging, classifying, or speculating; and because it attempts to catch the experience as it is received, that experience will not have a reasonable order but a chronological or associational one.[145]

The important thing is that the impressionistic mode questions the traditional ways of understanding and rendering reality, and focuses on indiscriminate sensory perception. Thus it resembles the mode of stream-of-consciousness, to which part of Manhattan Transfer adheres, as well as Winesburg, Ohio and As I Lay Dying.

On the whole this view of reality does not apply to the collective novel as a genre. What is true, however, is that these novels tend to describe human experiences as perceived momentarily by the characters themselves, which necessarily leads to a composition of dramatic scenes where narration is kept at a minimum. With the many characters involved, the

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[143]Paul Verlaine, Verlaine et les poètes symbolistes, ed. Alexandre Micha (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1943), p. 36.
[144]"Impressionism," Princeton Encyclopedia.
[145]Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism, p. 232.

point of view changes in each scene, and these bits and pieces in turn create the illusion of a cinematic montage, which often has been compared to the impressionistic brush-stroke technique. Although the methods might seem similar at times, we feel that the impressionistic attitude towards reality is not an end in itself in the collective novel. The important issue in the collective novel is human experiences within a social context.

The juxtaposition of scenes in the collective novel is nevertheless an important characteristic. Firstly, it serves as a compositional tool for eliminating the traditional narrator so as to obtain the much sought-after objectivity in the work. Secondly, the "scenic" form helps to solve the stylistic problem of how to render the story of a collective of people 'in action'. A third reason is that the method creates a special aesthetic effect upon the reader, which is known as the principle of montage. Actually montage is a cinematic technique of editing, explained by Sergei Eisenstein, the famous Russian filmmaker and theorist (1898-1948):

> ...any two pieces of a film stuck together inevitably combine to create a new concept, a new quality born of that juxtaposition.[146]

He continues in the same essay written in 1939:

> Representation A and representation B must be so selected from among all the possible features within the unfolding theme, they must be so chosen as to make their (theirs, and not any other elements') juxtaposition arouse in the spectator's perception

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[146]Sergei Eisenstein, Notes of a Film Director (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947), p. 64.

> and feelings the most complete possible image of the theme itself.[147]

As pointed out by Eisenstein, several examples of montage can be found in both literature and painting, such as in passages of Anna Karenina, Bel ami by Maupassant, Leonardo da Vinci's notes on the painting of the Deluge, as well as in our daily life experiences. The peculiar thing about the juxtaposition of montage pieces is, he says, that the result is something more like the product than the sum. This statement sounds much like Émile Durkheim's sociological theory that collectives are more than the sum of their parts, as well as Romains' ideas of unanimism. In the collective novel, we find that the montage principle applies not only to specific passages, but to the overall composition of series of scenes and also to the style within each scene. Naturally this proposition is a generalization with exceptions to the rule, but we do find that there is a correlation between the sociological premise inherent in collective behaviour, and the aesthetic principle employed in most collective novels.

The clearest example of montage is to be found in Manhattan Transfer, in which heterogeneous images, scenes, and metaphorical prose poems are juxtaposed to produce a single total effect of a changing community. Within each chapter the "scenic" passages play various notes of a certain theme. Within these passages we then find the individual montage pieces. From a host of possibilities, we

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[147]Ibid., p. 66.

will choose an incident in the second tableau of the first chapter to substantiate our point. The characteristics of Bud Korpenning are well selected, told either from the point of view of the objective narrator ("The breeze made the hair stir round the tight line of his cap and dried the sweat on his temples"), or of Bud himself, or by two different bystanders, the smartly dressed young man and the fellow behind the counter in a lunch wagon:

> "Say, friend, how fur [sic] is it into the city from where this ferry lands?" he asked a young man in a straw hat wearing a blue and white striped necktie who stood beside him.
>
> The young man's glance moved up from Bud's roadswelled shoes to the red wrist that stuck out from the frayed sleeves of his coat, past the skinny turkey's throat and slid up cockily into the intent eyes under the broken visored cap.
>
> "That depends where you want to get to."
>
> "How do I get to Broadway?...I want to get to the center of things."
>
> "Walk east a block and turn down Broadway and you'll find the center of things if you walk far enough."
>
> "Thank you sir. I'll do that."[148]

As an independent prose fragment, the passage above gives a physical description of the character in addition to an indication of his social background, his language, his reason for being there, his naiveté, and his immediate goal in life. In the context of the chapter "Ferryslip," this representation of Bud suggests the theme of arrival, which is also to be found in the representations of the newborn baby and the bearded immigrant who embraces the ideal of King Gillette. Within the short passage itself, there are contrasts that add to the theme of the whole novel: the

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[148]Dos Passos, Manhattan Transfer, pp. 3-4.

facts of class divisions, the peculiar superficial culture inherent in the urban centres, and the social mobility from the countryside to the city. Last, but not least, we already at this point detect the implicit irony in the novel, that if you walk far enough, you will find the center of things. For Bud, the center becomes self-destruction, as it becomes for the Metropolis itself, metaphorically speaking. The idea of montage technique is to arouse associations in the reader's mind on all levels of meaning in the total art work. No montage piece should be superfluous, and yet sufficient numbers of fragments are needed to communicate the entire meaning to the reader. Dos Passos was truly a master of this artistic medium.

Although Hans Kirk's narration is very different, it is still akin to the montage technique. In his collective novels, there are no chapter divisions, and the style is quite traditional. Each major section varies from eight to twelve pages, and the unifying theme in these sections is usually alluded to within the first paragraphs. Thus the introductory lines of the novel intimate arrival, hope, solemnity, and solidarity. The weather and the seasons are also thematic indicators, as in the book's second major passage: "Høsten begyndte i hede sommerdage med varmedis og tordenbyger."[149] The material plentyfulness from the harvest is here juxtaposed with the deteriorated state of the spiritual life at the new place. The paragraphs, which range

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[149]Kirk, Fiskerne, pp. 16-24.

in length from about four to fifteen lines, each contain a montage piece, and though the pieces connect logically, they all represent different aspects of the theme seen from many viewpoints.

As an example, a major section towards the end of the novel will clearly illustrate the method. It begins with "En regnkold forårsdag,"[150] and in the course of seven pages, the narrator focuses on three entirely different and seemingly unrelated episodes and characters. The first episode is about the runaway boy Martin who is working for and exploited by a well-to-do farmer. The next scene opens with "Sildegarnene var for længst ude,"[151] and tells about the sly confidence man Peder Hygum who manages to obtain a loan with the fishermen as guarantors. Finally the scene changes to the buxom Katrine and her pseudo-intellectual husband during a visit with the girl's old and illiterate father who gives away his savings to the wedded couple.[152] By juxtaposing the three representative scenes, a total image of the recurring theme arises, which in this case is a combination of exploitation and naiveté on the part of the sectarian people.

Turning to <u>As I Lay Dying</u>, we find that Faulkner's method of narration is unique. Each chapter is very short and is told in the first person, not by one person, but by each of the thirteen members of the group. In this book, the

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[150]Ibid., p. 188.
[151]Ibid., p. 190.
[152]Ibid., p. 191.

objective narrator has totally vanished, and yet the traces of the guiding interpreter of reality are obvious. Darl, Cora, Jewel, Cash, and the other members of the Bundren family could never have told their own story without the expertise of the author. Faulkner's camera eye is focused on each individual, but at the same time another "objective" apparatus is at work, revealing the underlying subconscious mental life and even some extrasensory perception. Reading a chapter is like entering the hidden interior of a human brain with all its diffuse sensory perceptions translated into various levels of thoughts, associations, and rational responses. By juxtaposing the different utterances and thoughts, the author creates a very vivid image of the whole burial ordeal, while at the same time he represents each character as a unique being.

Part way through the novel, the philosophical Darl speaks about his brother Cash ,who is busy working on the coffin.[153] Darl is intelligent, and his mind never seems to rest as he is constantly making mental associations in an effort to grasp the mystery of existence. Directly following this piece of insightful narrative is a short section devoted to Cash, who thinks very mechanically.[154] His reasoning is in point form and deals only with what can be observed and measured, thus his description of the coffin stands in contrast to, but also complements, that of Darl.

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[153]William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), pp. 71-76.
[154]Ibid., pp. 77-78.

The next chapter, spoken by Vardaman, is perhaps the most striking bit of montage in the novel. All he says is: "My mother is a fish".[155] This statement adds yet another dimension to the theme of being and not being. In the context of the surrounding narratives, the simple phrase tells a great deal about the small boy, his level of communication, and his intuitive understanding of death, which is as valuable as the more sophisticated reasoning by Darl or practical observation by Cash. By this method of introspection, Faulkner not only explores what one does as a social being, but what one is as a human being, and has thus added an existential dimension to the meaning of the novel.

The technique of simultaneity is used extensively in Mort de quelqu'un. Instead of relating the same event from several viewpoints, the omniscient narrator in this book jumps back and forth between two or more localities to capture incidents occurring at the same time in order to strengthen the theme. In chapter iv the scenery alternates between Paris and the home village of Godard. In the big city two little girls are collecting money from the tenants to buy a wreath, while the old father is on his way to the funeral. Both parties are overwhelmed by the situation and try to cope with the idea of having to verbalize their confused feelings.

> A Paris, les enfants s'arrêtaient sur un palier, soufflaient pour ne pas avoir l'air émues, et frottaient longuement leurs semelles au paillasson....

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[155]Ibid., p. 79.

> Un pauvre homme des villages, nul ne le remarque; il n'intéresse jamais plusieurs personnes à la fois, sauf, par hasard, en trois ou quatre circonstances de la vie; un soir où il s'est saoulé, et où il injure le monde; le jour de sa noce; le jour où quelqu'un est mort chez lui. S'il ne profite pas de ces rares occasions, il ne connaît pas la joie d'être quel'un qu'on regarde.
>
> Les fillettes sonnèrent en se jetant un coup d'oeil complice et peureux.
>
> Le veillard fit halte à mi-chemin du bureau.
>
> Soudain, il lui paraissait douloureux de raconter l'événement....[156]

The girls' uneasiness emphasizes the old man's hesitancy and vice versa, while they all have to come to terms with being the center of attention for a short while. The characters' mixed feelings of joy, grief, and anxiety are instantly perceived by the reader, as the latter subconsciously transfers the psychological state of one character to the other. The total image comes across much stronger this way than if the two incidents had been told in sequence, one after the other.

As a last example of disjointed narrative, we will return to the film medium. Being a written narrative, the novel will always be distinct from moving pictures, but nevertheless there are some parallels worth mentioning between the collective novel and certain modern films. One of the best art works in the collective genre, aesthetically speaking, is in our opinion a cinéroman, L'Argent de poche (1976), by the French auteur, François Truffaut. This film deals with a group of children and teen-agers in a small town, and the major theme is the small changes that occur in

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[156]Romains, Mort de quelqu'un, pp. 75-6.

these children physically, emotionally, and socially in the course of a few months. The composition of film strips is very similar to the narrative structure in the collective novel. The camera follows now one child, now another, sometimes in a group in the classroom, and at other times individually in the homes or in the street. Each character has his or her own story that is distinct from and yet a part of the story of the group, and at the same time the spectator is presented with a portrait of the entire town from the children's point of view. Finally, the collective of youngsters represents the very nature of children in general, as it appears to the author. The progression of the cinematic narratives is also here contrapuntal and intertwines like the voices in a fugue. Incidentally, Truffaut calls the film "un film unanimiste," which the English translator paraphrases as "a collective film."[157]

The criterion of objectivity was not a new invention in the course of realistic writing, but only a few authors had come close to the ideal form. Herman Bang, a contemporary of Georg Brandes, was thus an advocate of objective narration. His aim was to write novels that were comprised of "scenes." Further, he advised modern writers to avoid the tedious analysis and descriptions so often found in the novels of Zola and other naturalists.[158] This goal he evidently

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[157]François Truffaut, L'Argent de poche: cinéroman (Paris: Flammarion, 1976), p. 10, and Small Change: A Film Novel, tr. Anselm Hollo (New York: Grove Press, 1976), p. 10.

[158]Hakon Stangerup, Dansk Litteraturhistorie (Copenhagen: Politikens forlag, 1966), III, 237.

achieved in his novel about Copenhagen, Stuk (1887), which could be considered a precursor of the collective novel. On the other hand, the tendency towards documentarism was strongly favoured by several other authors of collective novels, as already mentioned in connection with Fiskerne and Människor kring en bro.

These writers wanted to portray a section of contemporary society and specific social situations in which they themselves were involved. For this reason the subject-matter was usually either researched or experienced by the writer himself. Kirk, Dos Passos, and Romains do not burden us with long descriptions, but manage to incorporate the researched material into the action. Other authors, like Lo-Johansson and Martin Koch, tend to adhere to the positivistic methods of the early naturalists, as is the case in Traktorn where many pages are devoted to long statements on local dairies, veterinary colleges, and various other agricultural institutions.

Like the modern documentary and report novels of the 1960's and 1970's,[159] the collective novels only cater to a small audience that might be interested in either statarna in Sweden, fishing settlements in the Faroe Islands and on the Danish west coast, or urban life in the New World at the beginning of this century. Where the documentary novelist is

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[159]Tor Edvin Dahl, "Dokumentar- og rapportlitteratur," in Norsk litterær årbok, 1971, 193-216; George Bisztray, "Documentarism and the Modern Scandinavian Novel," in Scandinavian Studies, 48 (1976), 71-85; Lars Peter Rømhild, "Dokumentarismen i litteraturhistorisk perspektiv," in Meddelelser fra danskлærerforeningen, 1974, 302-20.

interested in actual historical events, as for example in The Armies of the Night by Norman Mailer, In Cold Blood by Truman Capote, and Charrière's Papillon, the collectivist follows the tradition in realistic literature, in which typical, but hypothetical situations are dramatised.

On the other hand, the documentation in the collective novel has a much deeper meaning and exerts a stronger effect upon the reader than, for example, the principles of local colour and verisimilitude, as both subject and message are inherent in the research done by the author. Every one of the collective novels has a great deal of social content in it that requires an active and informed reader willing to take part in the debate proposed by the writer. This question of debate finally leads us to a discussion of Stoff as it is arranged in various themes.

V. THEMES AND IDEOLOGIES

> We are now willing to admit that a writer's choice of subject is an esthetic decision, that the conceptual outlook is a determinig part of the structural pattern, that the message is somehow inherent in the medium. [160]

In 1789 the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was signed, and Europe saw its first modern democracy being born in France under the banner of Liberté, Égalité, et Fraternité. The absolute monarchs in Europe died out within the following century along with feudalism, and free constitutions became very popular on both sides of the Atlantic. But as capitalism grew in strength hand in hand with industrialism during the nineteenth century, many respectable men of letters became increasingly critical of the new societies which seemed a far cry from the democratic ideals announced by Benjamin Franklin in America and Robespierre in France. The realistic writing of that century, often referred to as critical realism, was by and large an expression of great disappointment with the system and its destructiveness. Three new classes established themselves, the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. The sufferings of the latter group especially evoked the sympathy of many writers. Others were also

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[160] Harry Levin, "Thematics and Criticism," in The Disciplines of Criticism: Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation, and History, ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 145.

concerned about the stifling life of the middle classes, which both Balzac and Flaubert documented in their novels along with Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot in England, and Ibsen, Strindberg, and Pontoppidan in Scandinavia.

A common trait in many of these realistic and naturalistic works of the past century is the theme of the individual versus the huge, unmanageable, and hostile environment. The Modern Breakthrough in Scandinavia was indeed a manifestation of an individualistic ideology carried forward by the avant-garde liberals. In his lengthy study of Scandinavian literature from this period, Gunnar Ahlström points out that this indulgence in individualism in Europe goes back to an era when rigid authority had the shape of absolute monarchy and aristocratic monopoly. Such is the case with Schiller's Wilhelm Tell.[161] In the later realistic literature, however, the rebellion turned towards the bureaucratic machinery of a system that was based on a democratic majority. What the new freedom fighters wanted was to destroy the much hated "public opinion," as Brandes called it, and develop a social system consisting of a collective of free individuals with room for everybody to develop. Henrik Ibsen among others agreed with Brandes' idealistic goals, as can be seen in Samfundets støtter and Et dukkehjem. The trend towards individualism is also apparent in realistic writing in other parts of Europe as

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[161]Gunnar Ahlström, Det moderna genombrottet i Nordens litteratur (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1947), pp. 269-300.

well as in America. Huckleberry Finn and Madame Bovary are both obvious examples of individuals and their fights against a constrictive society. Under the influence of the doctrine of naturalism, this ideology changed in some cases from being a rebellion to being a pessimistic determinism, as we find it in Zola's Rougon-Macquart series and Dreiser's work.

With the collective novels, the authors chose to portray the groups in our societies rather than the single individuals, and as we have seen, they succeeded in doing so as far as the stories are concerned. The question now remains whether the underlying ideology of past literature in fact still survived or whether it has changed to something distinctively different in these novels devoted to social groups.

The history of individualism as a philosophy of life in Western societies goes back to the ancient Athenian democracy, and it has returned in many guises since, reaching a peak during the Renaissance and later in the philosophy of John Locke. The spirit of individualism might be seen as a protest against political authority, whether this took the form of tribal tyranny, feudal oppression, or democratic power of a majority. Certain protagonists in literature like folk tale heroes, on the other hand, could be viewed in the context of the mythical, epic hero. In this thesis, however, we will limit the scope of our discussion to encompass novels which deal with the individual versus

society. With the rebirth of science and celebration of nature after the Dark Ages, we can trace yet another stream of thought, a modification of the individualistic theory of the nature of man and his relationship to society. In the eighteenth century Rousseau interpreted this social interaction as an organic whole, rather than a strictly mechanical relationship, and with the later philosophy of Hegel, history saw some important theories of idealistic collectivism, in which the individual acquires significance and freedom only through his membership in some social entity.

The battle of the individual in trying to gain his right to self-determinism is an ever-recurring theme in literature. In the collective novel this struggle has been intensified by opposing, but coexisting, beliefs, that man on the one hand is a social being and an integrated part of a greater community, and on the other hand is an autonomous individual. It could be due to this dichotomy in the existence of modern man that the collective novel exhibits a variety of faces, now a tragic one as in Manhattan Transfer, now one of optimism and celebration as in Fiskerne, Noatun, and Mort de quelqu'un. In between the two poles we find a range of different attitudes, mostly on the negative side, such as disappointment in Kolonien, hopelessness in Kontormennesker, bitterness in Koch's books, and cynicism in As I Lay Dying.

More so than in any other kind of realistic literature,

the collective novel portrays man as a social being. At the same time, the novelist shows concern for the individual and his survival in the crowd, and examines the pros and cons of modern collective existence. The themes of alienation and communication are equally important in the collective novel, and for the most part they represent two sides of the same coin. The sociological group has enormous potential, both destructive and constructive, and is capable of crushing the individual at the same time as it can strengthen the collective. David Riesman and Dos Passos see the urban group as a menace to human enrichment on the individual level, and Dos Passos would probably agree with the sociologist that the average American is a solitary figure:

> The middle-class urban American of today, the "other-directed," is, by contrast, in a characterological sense more than the product of his peers--that is, in sociological terms, his "peer-groups," the other kids at school or in the block. In adult life he continues to respond to these peers, not only with overt conformity, as do people in all times and places, but also in a deeper sense, in the very quality of his feeling. Yet, paradoxically, he remains a lonely member of the crowd because he never comes really close to the others or to himself. [162]

At the other end of the spectrum that symbolizes modern man stands a group of proletarian writers guided by the theories of Karl Marx. Some one hundred years ago this philosopher was aware of the problems of man's estrangement, but related this phenomenon directly to economic factors. While the capitalist concept of private ownership breeds

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[162]David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. v.

alienation, not only among the capitalists themselves, but also among the workers, and even in the family unit where the woman especially leads a life excluded from production, the organization of the proletariat has the potential of creating a strong community based on solidarity and intense communication.

Unfortunately there is not one fixed formula available to describe the collective novel as a genre in terms of ideologies and related themes. In a very general way we recognize three distinctly different approaches to the problem of social collectives that all touch upon basic questions of alienation and communication. As outlined above, the two extreme positions are indicative of the ideals of either individualism or collectivism. The third direction is the one taken by the unanimists, who celebrate the idea of a collective existence, but in contrast to the followers of Marx, they do not relate it to socio-economic factors.

First then, there is the kind of approach that is founded on an individualistic ideology. In Manhattan Transfer, not one character survives the grinding effect of the social machinery, but exists more or less as a mechanical part with its basic humanity lost in the process. The loneliness of the characters in this novel is frightening, whether it be the unloved baby or the mature adult in a seemingly secure and comfortable environment. The city is a monster that swallows up love and human warmth,

and yet Dos Passos portrays Manhattan as having a certain beauty and charm. The Metropolis is not quite like the ugly mine in Germinal, but comparable to the wealthy and magnificent Babylon of antiquity. Dos Passos' works have often been quoted as being pessimistic,[163] and while this is a valid interpretation, we must also remember that his dark outlook on North American society was an expression of disappointment. He believed in Man, and judging from his writing and the political activities of his youth, he also believed in a society of free individuals, but what he saw was a great potential that was being crushed by its own strength. Nobody in Manhattan Transfer succeeds, love and faith are ineffective, and even mammon and fame become meaningless as they only make people glitter on the outside, while they are hollow on the inside. Communication and solidarity are mocked at, and labour organizations are just another proof of corrupt power struggles. Although far from being a revolutionary writer, Dos Passos seems to agree with Marx in his views on man's alienation in a capitalist society. Only Dos Passos left it at that and did not recognize the potential strength inherent in the masses. The basic enjoyments of life that help make man grow richer in a humanistic sense have become commodities in themselves. Even the enjoyment of beauty has for the inhabitants of Manhattan turned into an object to be consumed and then discarded.

The lack of communication has an even more tragic

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[163]Becker, p. 98; and Colley, p. 53.

effect in Winesburg, Ohio, where every individual in the town is locked into a prison of his own. They all cry out for help and understanding in their own grotesque way, but only create fear and apprehension in their fellow men. In Anderson's novel, individual freedom has been stifled by conventional norms born out of small-town tyranny and narrow-mindedness. The ninth commandment in the Dano-Norwegian Aksel Sandemose's Jantelov holds true for Winesburg as it does for Nykøbing Mors, Sandemose's home town, as well as for Beaver Coulee, Alberta, a farming community in his En sjømann går i land (1931): "Du skal ikke tro at noen bryr seg om deg" (Thou shalt not think that anybody cares about you).[164]

It is as typical of Manhattan Transfer and Winesburg, Ohio, as it is of As I Lay Dying, that there are hardly any scenes of ensembles. Each group member is seen in isolation which corresponds to the particular form employed by the authors. It is left up to the reader to gather the impressions and create an image of the collectives in question.

Communication is achieved momentarily by some of the characters who seem to have a more developed sensitivity towards others, like Jimmy Herf in Manhattan Transfer and George Willard in Anderson's novel, who both in the end turn their backs on the community. In As I Lay Dying Darl Bundren has some strange powers of extrasensory perception that

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[164]Aksel Sandemose, Norges litteraturhistorie, ed. E. Beyer (Oslo: J. W. Cappelens forlag, 1975), V, 307.

reach the secret thoughts of others, but he is the one who is taken away to an insane asylum. The potential and longing for communication is present, but any attempt to maintain it is defeated either by means of the social system, or, as Faulkner's novel implies, because of the tragic human condition.

Death usually brings people together, both physically and emotionally. The death motif[165] often appears in the collective novels, and the treatment of it is generally an indication of the attitude towards alienation and communication in the literary work. A young married woman in the Norwegian novel En dag i oktober commits suicide, which gives rise to an examination of both the prejudicial powers of the social collective and the vulnerability of the nonconformist. The book is very interesting, as it also deals with the problems of the marriage institution in a modern society, that is, Oslo anno 1930, and how it can destroy individual creativity. A third problem debated is the question of women's liberation, which has a different twist to it than in Et dukkehjem. Apart from the fact that the narrator does not put much faith in the "nature" of the female Homo sapiens, he does turn the reader's attention towards the ugly sides of a tyrannical majority in power.

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[165] The term motif is distingishuable from theme and is here used in the way defined by Elisabeth Frenzel, that is, as a smaller thematic unit "which does not yet encompass an entire plot or story line but in itself constitutes an element pertaining to content and situation (from Ulrich Weisstein's Comparative Literature and Literary Theory: Survey and Introduction, tr. William Riggan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 138).

Furthermore, he explores the consequences of the selfish type of individualism that the estranged husband has chosen for himself. The woman's plunge to death is thus a result of the collective's condemnation combined with the husband's rejection and her own hopeless search for identity and independence.

In Mort de quelqu'un the death motif is handled in an entirely different way. Romains' faith in collective existence is obvious and stems from a philosophy of life quite different from the individualism implicit in Hoel and Dos Passos. From the viewpoint of the Czech Marxist Karel Teige, unanimism is a positive step towards collectivism,[166] although Romains does not deal with the masses in terms of a class society. In fact Romains' early conception of unanimism grew out of a religious crisis in his youth and became a substitute religion for him.

Still, it is quite possible to experience solitude and estrangement in the world of Romains' characters. Godard, for example, feels it strongly when he stands atop the Panthéon and overlooks the panorama of Paris. For the first time in his life, he realizes the complexity of the place and all the agitated lives that are hidden underneath. To become one with the crowd is for Romains a matter of choice. The possibility is always present, but one has to make a conscious effort to be actively involved. It is too late for

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[166]Karel Teige, "Neue proletarische Kunst" in Marxismus und Literatur: Eine Dokumentation in drei Bände, ed. Fritz J. Raddatz (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1971), III, 87-91.

Godard, but the people gathered around his body exert a unified strength for a moment comparable to that of the masses in The Iron Flood by Serafimovich.

The people in Paris and New York are not really very different from each other, and yet Romains and Dos Passos turned the two cities into habitats that are worlds apart. The human potential has been explored in both cases, but the outcome has been painted in either all black or all white. In Fiskerne we observe an attitude towards social collectives that are neither black nor white, but more realistically shaded in grey nuances. The advantages and disadvantages of collective strength are brought into the open along with the question of the individual's freedom.

Kirk would never have accepted the unanimist idea that all of humanity could unite and become of one soul if only the will were present. To him the problems are social and economic in origin, and he sought a social answer. In order to meet this end, Kirk followed the methods of his great idol, Honoré de Balzac, and studied the dynamics of society rather than merely observing it from a fixed angle. In the New Masses during a rather hot debate with the editor, Michael Gold, who was known for his communist orientation, Dos Passos wrote: "The terrible danger to explorers is that they always find what they are looking for."[167] In spite of himself Dos Passos was in fact one of these explorers who found in urban life what he believed to be there. Without

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[167]John Dos Passos, "The New Masses I'd Like," New Masses, I (1926), 20.

any hesitation the same statement can be applied to Romains.

Objectivity is a dangerous word to use in literary criticism, but if the realism of Balzac is any criterion at all, then Kirk's first novels fit the description. It is a well-known fact that Lukacs, like Marx and Engels, was a great admirer of Balzac, and had the critic known the Dane Kirk, he undoubtedly would have put him in the same admirable category of writers as Balzac. The common trait in the literature of these two writers is their ability to see that man is not necessarily good or bad, but that the economics of society, upbringing, tradition, and environmental conditions are the factors that shape his moral quality.[168] In Kirk's opinion it is therefore not a matter of chance that the fishermen become religious fanatics, but a logical consequence of their particular social and economic situation.

At the time we are introduced to the fishermen, they are acting as an immigrant group, and we follow them through the settling period till the group is integrated in the larger community. Like any group of newcomers, these men and women form a united front, first and foremost to survive economically, and secondly to escape the frightening experience of loneliness in a strange place. Small towns in industrialized countries changed tremendously during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, both in the New World and in Europe. As an

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[168]Hans Kirk, "Honoré de Balzac," in Litteratur og tendens, p. 142.

example, the New England Hilltown described in the sociological study, The Human Group, underwent changes similar to those in the fictitious village in Fiskerne. The Finns in the American study sought security in their language and family traditions, and the Danish fishermen found refuge in religion. Based on a Marxist interpretation, Kirk maintained that the puritanical Inner Mission was for the peasants and the poorest of the countryside a substitute for the social class-consciousness developing among the proletariat in the city.[169] Although in essence backwards and reactionary, the Mission became a positive thing for these people, in that it gave them enough self-confidence to oppose the status quo.

On the other hand, the Inner Mission had its drawbacks, as it crippled the people's natural instincts and in some cases pushed individuals to a state of anomie. The latter concept invented by Durkheim has no Marxist foundation, but, nonetheless, it is apt to describe some behavioural disorders in Fiskerne quite accurately. The religious group loses control over Laust Sand and his stepdaughter, and while feeling rejected by both their fellow men and God, they lose their integrity and are finally pushed into total alienation.

The case of the young Tabita is quite different, although she also withdraws from the group. In contrast to the other unfortunate two, Tabita does not lose her identity

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[169]Bredsdorff, "Marx og Freud i Fiskerne," p. 249.

completely, but assumes a new one in a different social environment. Like the younger generation of Finns in Homan's Hilltown, Tabita seeks better job opportunities elsewhere, and is at first overwhelmed by the strangeness and hostility of the bigger town. It is not until she becomes liberated from the oppressive sexual taboos of the Mission and establishes a secure relationship with a young worker that she can foresee a worthwhile future.

At the outset of the novel, the collective of fishermen is marked by solidarity and close communication. The members work, entertain, and worship together and become increasingly stronger as a unit. At the closing of the book, the situation is outwardly stable, but a few flaws in the social life indicate the beginning of a slow disintegration of the community. Two adults and a baby die untimely deaths due to group pressure, the well-to-do family Vrist keeps more to itself, and the youth is heading for other places. In theoretical terms the rising standard of living increases the power and stability of the group. However, once a certain economic level has been reached, the material basis for unification becomes meaningless until the group finally dissolves internally. The village is still there, but nobody communicates, and another Winesburg has been created. As we know today, the role of the Inner Mission, or any other church for that matter, has declined drastically, and closely-knit rural communities like the one in Fiskerne are few and far between in modern literature.

In Kirk's subsequent two novels, Daglejerne/De ny tider, the central theme of collectivism is further developed. Basically the novels portray the class struggle between the small-holders and day labourers on the one side, and the landowners and other exploiters on the other side. Thus the polarization has the function of showing the positiveness of the lower classes and the negativeness of the other classes. The plot can roughly be divided into three stages as far as the development of the lower class is concerned. In the beginning a vague class-consciousness exists among the day labourers, and consequently a group solidarity develops. At the second stage, the solidarity expands politically towards socialism on a national basis, and finally the industrial workers unite in the name of the International Proletarian Movement.[170] Avoiding the pitfalls of utopia, Kirk ends his story at a point where the class struggle is still being fought vigorously from both sides while revisionist factions within the labour movement are slowly developing. Without his saying so directly, it is clearly the author's intention to show the great potential inherent in socialist collectivism when organized properly.

A group like the fishermen is bound to disintegrate once the materialist bonds start to loosen. Moral support will no longer be as necessary and the former religious

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[170]For a discussion on the three levels of class-consciousness in Daglejerne/De ny tider, see the analysis by Jens Kr. Andersen and Leif Emerek, Hans Kirks forfatterskab (Copenhagen: Stjernebøgernes Kulturbibliotek, Vinten, 1974), pp. 34-44.

humility towards a punishing God will likewise lose its impact. Kirk observed that the two popular religious movements in Denmark correlated geographically very closely with the fertility of the soil, in that the followers of Grundtvig were mainly economically secure farmers sitting on fertile land, while the adherents of the Inner Mission in general were among the poorest. Referring to Hilltown once again, we see that Homans also points out the relationship between social classes and different religious denominations, the richest there being Unitarian, the middle class remaining faithful to the old Protestant creed, and the poorest being Methodist.

Kirk, like the sociologist, based his group descriptions on scientific research and tried to establish a pattern in the changing community that would clarify the economic as well as the social and psychological aspects of that change. As a result, Kirk's novels have much more in common with sociological analysis than the novels by Dos Passos and Romains have, the latter writers relying on their own emotional involvement with the Stoff. In comparison, the extremely optimistic and pessimistic renditions of social life tend to transcend experience and remain in the world of ideas, thus bordering on the mythic representation of reality.

So far we have discussed three different categories of the collective novel based on their underlying ideologies. At a point in between, a fourth group of novels seems to

subscribe to the basic ideals of collectivism, but ends on an unhappy note. We shall call this attitude defeatism. The books under consideration here include several of the Swedish collective novels (Arbetera, Människor kring en bro, Traktorn) in addition to Martin A. Hansen's Kolonien and Nu opgiver han, and Kontormennesker by Leck Fischer. H. C. Branner's Legetøj has a special place in this group, as it deals with the dangerous consequences of collectivism when carried to the extreme of despotic totalitarianism, alias Fascism. In the miniature state "Kejserboderne," life is run according to the slogan "Den enkelte er intet, forretningen er alt!"[171] while power struggles and moral decay are penetrating the small society from the governing power at the top to the proletariat at the bottom of the building. The general worldview in Legetøj is pessimistic in terms of social progress and does not contain any of Kirk's fundamental belief in the class-struggle. Only two individuals survive the ordeal morally, but this is not due to a social awakening as with Tabita. The essence in Branner's philosophy of life is much more like that of Martin Koch, the author of Arbetera, who was first and foremost a humanist.[172] In Legetøj Martin Lind overcomes the temptations of power and prestige and exclaims: "Det eneste

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[171]H. C. Branner, Legetøj: En roman om en forretning (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1961), p. 285.
[172]Paul Bager, "Martin Koch--en introduktion," Meddelelser fra dansklærerforeningen, 4 (1977), 365-74.

faste i verden er et menneskes etiske værdi."[173]

This humanist manifesto of Branner's invented character brings us full circle back to the question of the individual as a human being in the social group. Naturally, in its full scope this problem is enormous, embracing the whole of social psychology and philosophy. For this study we have had to content ourselves with making a few points especially important in regard to the themes and ideologies in the collective novel.

As we know, Durkheim insisted upon society being an entity sui generis, that could be separated from the individual and studied for its own sake. The writers of collective novels do not perceive it quite this way. Even though each of them had lectured and theorized about society as consisting of groups, deep down every one had been greatly concerned about the single individual. The old question of whether society molds the individual or the individual determines the character of the group has remained unanswered as yet. Some suggestions have been made in these novels, however, that the two forces are mutually dependent. Somehow it does not seem logical to discuss the quality of social groups in a literary context without actually questioning the human elements, and that is really what the collective novels deal with.

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[173]H. C. Branner, Legetøj: En roman om en forretning (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1961), p. 287.

VI. CONCLUSION

It is not necessarily a good thing to have a system of classification, especially if only one system is known. However, it can be a helpful device in the difficult process of understanding the realm of literature. In this thesis we have chosen to classify a group of novels according to their particular form, techniques, subject-matter, and meaning, and have labelled them collective novels. Yet, the proposed classification does not exclude other systems or other labels that could illuminate various aspects of these novels. As in Gestalt psychology, it depends upon the observer's point of view how similar elements in two or more phenomena are being related.

Our stand has been to describe the literary works under consideration as social novels, which deal with society and its inhabitants in an untraditional manner. As a point of departure, man is perceived of as a member of many different social groups within society, rather than as an isolated, autonomous individual. In order to communicate this basic premise, the writers of collective novels have experimented with both structure and techniques, and have thus arrived at a unique novelistic genre.

Form and content have proven to be very closely related in the novels analysed. Thus the elimination of a single protagonist has changed the focus towards the social group.

In our view, it is the story of the group or groups as such that makes the plot develop. The individual is found in each short montage piece of narration, and as far as the plot is concerned, he or she must be seen in the light of the larger collective. The group on the other hand has its own set of rules and goals that do not necessarily coincide with those of the individual. It is this dichotomy of man as an individual and as a group member that causes the tensions within himself and within the group. Human conflicts are not ignored in the collective novel, but should be interpreted within a historical context where society is perceived as a specific collective, according to time and place, rather than as a group of individuals acted upon by a universal god.

In order to overcome the special problems inherent in a collective story, the authors employed narrative devices that helped keeping the scattered parts together. Firstly, the narrator's role is strictly that of a witness. Seldom does he tell the story from the distance. Instead he observes the characters close by, either as these are engaged in dialogues or else in silent thought. The omniscient narrator is capable of revealing inner monologues of both individuals and entire collectives, and at times he can reach the pre-speech levels of his characters. Apart from the people, the narrator also describes scenery and work places. Without explaining the relationship between each passage of narration, the whole of the narrative

approaches an impressionistic portrayal. The most important technique employed in the collective novel, however, is that of montage. A term borrowed from film editing, montage implies a series of objective representations that together create an image which is more than and different from the individual representations. Thus the writer of collective novels overcomes the problem of tedious descriptions and analysis by letting the characters tell their own stories while in action. Furthermore, the montage technique enables the reader to make mental associations by transferring effects from one representation to another. In this way the technique strengthens the unifying themes. The methods of simultaneity and ensembles are equally effective when the author wishes to bring the disassociated scenes together.

The three novels analysed in the second chapter are examples of different approaches to the basic premise that man is a part of a collective whole. In Manhattan Transfer the capitalistic urban society has a destructive effect upon its citizens, who either kill themselves, cooperate with the system and become corrupt and robbed of human compassion, or else leave the place in disgust. The structure of the novel accentuates this perception of the big city, in that it is built around the various themes expounded in the chapter headings. Within each chapter we meet a large number of people who are all sociologically related and yet are lonely beings. To further the historical perspective, the novel goes beyond the slice-of-life portrait and depicts the

changing society from being "the land of opportunity" to a Babylon in ruins, morally speaking. The disjointed life stories of the characters thus tell us more about the nature of the collective than about the characters themselves.

Mort de quelqu'un and Fiskerne both express a more positive attitude towards social collectives. In these novels several smaller groups change and interact and in this way make the plot progress. In contrast to the American novel, these collectives are recognizable as primary groups which at some point during their existence are defined by a sense of solidarity. Whereas Romains relies on sociological theories in his construction of the plot, Kirk adds a historical dimension to his work. As in the majority of collective novels, the characters are types and they are instrumental to the stories around the collectives which follow some sociological or historical plan. At the same time, these novels are not case studies, as we may find in textbooks, but imaginary stories that reflect potential human suffering as well as human progress inherent in our modern social collectives.

As a final comment, we want to draw attention towards our theory, that the stories of the collectives appear to be more than merely the sum of the stories of each individual in the group. As in sociological group theories originating in the nineteenth century, the collective novels treat social groups as autonomous bodies that function irrespective of individual lives. In the literary context,

this idea is reflected in the plot structures centered around the groups. Furthermore, the same principle is found in the montage technique which is based on the idea that two representations in juxtaposition create an image different from the individual representations.

We find it more than just a coincidence that the same principle is present in the structural framework of the plot, in a narrative technique that is predominant in most of the collective novels, and finally in the sociological theory which professes that group consciousness is more than the sum of each individual's consciousness. It is in view of these findings, that we have classified Manhattan Transfer, Mort de quelqu'un, and Fiskerne as belonging to the genre of collective novels.

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